Historical Writing on the
Peoples of Asia

Historians of
INDIA, PAKISTAN
and CEYLON

Edited by C. H. Philips

SCHOOL OF
ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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HISTORIANS OF INDIA, PAKISTAN AND CEYLON

Edited by

C. H. PHILIPS

Professor of Oriental History
University of London

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PREFACE

Between the years 1956 and 1958 the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, held a series of study conferences to survey and evaluate the course and character of historical writing on the peoples of Asia. To bring this large subject down to manageable parts the method of analysis by region was adopted; and South Asia, South East Asia, the Near, Middle and Far East were in turn examined. In historical depth the survey of each region extended from the period of the early empires and literatures, through the age of Western dominance and the freedom movements down to the present day. Writings in both Western and Asian literatures were analysed.

The conferences brought together the leading authorities in these studies from Asia and the West and had the effect of making them more keenly aware not only of the underlying assumptions, predilections and prejudices of past writers but also of their own standpoints as historians. These investigations, which are continuing, have an enhanced value because they are taking place at a time when historians are seeking to rewrite Asian history and the peoples of Asia and the West are adjusting their relationships.

In preparing for each conference the same methods were used. Seminar groups, including a judicious balance of mature scholars and younger historians in training from Asian and Western countries, were established to analyse in detail the papers which had been prepared according to an agreed, comprehensive plan by the prospective members of the forthcoming conference. The business of the conferences therefore consisted not in reading papers but in attempting to solve the problems thrown up by the seminars.

Believing that these conferences have made a contribution to 'the well-being of mankind' I wish to affirm my deep appreciation of the Rockefeller Foundation, which met the major part of the financial costs, and also of the farsightedness and support of its officers, who contributed substantially to the effectiveness of the work done.

In the view that the papers which were submitted to the conference possess an intrinsic and comparative value the School of Oriental and African Studies has generously provided funds for their publication and, suitably edited and introduced, they will appear under the following editors:

Professor W. G. Beasley and Professor E. G. Pulleyblank: China and Japan;
Professor D. G. E. Hall: South East Asia;
Professor B. Lewis and Dr. P. M. Holt: The Near and Middle East;
Professor C. H. Philips: India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

Over the very wide and diverse field of studies covered by this volume it has not been feasible to apply a single system of transliteration. For help and advice in preparing this volume for the press I am particularly indebted to my colleagues, Professor A. L. Basham, Dr. K. Ballhatchet, and Dr. P. Hardy, and to Miss Daphne Pulham, who cheerfully undertook the laborious task of typing a transcript of the conference discussions, and also to Dr. B. N. Pandey and Dr. S. R. Mehrotra, who have prepared the index. Finally, the editor and contributors wish to place on record their appreciation of the work of Mr. R. J. Hoy, Deputy Librarian of the School of Oriental and African Studies, who has given freely of his time and energy in the laborious task of reading and correcting the proofs.

C. H. Philips

School of Oriental and
African Studies

CONTENTS

PREFACE v

INTRODUCTION 1

PART I

IDEAS OF HISTORY IN THE EARLY EMPIRES AND LITERATURES

(A) *Ancient India*

1. IDEAS OF HISTORY IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE *R. C. Majumdar* 13

2. THE PALI CHRONICLE OF CEYLON *L. S. Perera* 29

3. THE PALI CANON AND ITS COMMENTARIES AS AN HISTORICAL RECORD *A. K. Warder* 44

4. THE KASHMIR CHRONICLE *A. L. Basham* 57

5. HISTORICAL IDEAS IN EARLY TAMIL LITERATURE *K. K. Pillay* 66

6. HISTORICAL WRITING IN SINHALESE *C. E. Godakumbura* 72

7. THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF INDIAN BARDIC LITERATURE *C. von Fürer-Haimendorf* 87

8. NUMISMATISTS AND HISTORICAL WRITING *A. K. Narain* 94

9. HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN SOCIAL ORDER *R. S. Sharma* 102

(B) *India in the period of Muslim Rule*

10. SOME STUDIES IN PRE-MUGHAL MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY *P. Hardy* 115

11. THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY MUSLIM HISTORIANS IN SUFI WRITINGS *Abdur Rashid* 128

12. THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY MUSLIM HISTORIANS IN MUGHAL OFFICIAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS *Abdur Rashid* 139

PART II

HISTORICAL WRITING IN THE PERIODS OF EUROPEAN DOMINANCE AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

(A) *Writings in Western Languages*

13. FIVE PORTUGUESE HISTORIANS *J. B. Harrison* 155

14. DUTCH HISTORICAL WRITING ON SOUTH ASIA *K. W. Goonewardena* 170

15. FRENCH HISTORICAL WRITING ON EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES IN INDIA *S. P. Sen* 183

16. DANISH HISTORICAL WRITING ON COLONIAL ACTIVITIES IN ASIA, 1616–1845 *K. Glamann* 209

17. JAMES MILL, MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE, AND THE HISTORY OF INDIA *C. H. Philips* 217

18. MACAULAY'S WRITINGS ON INDIA *R. K. Das Gupta* 230

19. IDEAS OF HISTORY IN INDIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WRITING: A PRELIMINARY STUDY *F. R. Allchin* 241

20. MODERN HISTORIANS OF ANCIENT INDIA *A. L. Basham* 260

21. MODERN MUSLIM HISTORICAL WRITING ON MEDIEVAL MUSLIM INDIA *P. Hardy* 294

22. NOTES ON W. H. MORELAND AS HISTORIAN *J. B. Harrison* 310

23. MODERN MUSLIM HISTORICAL WRITING IN ENGLISH *W. Cantwell Smith* 319

24. THE THEME OF IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM IN MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING ON INDIA *H. Furber* 332

25. SOME ASPECTS OF HISTORICAL WRITING ON INDIA BY PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES DURING THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES *K. A. Ballhatchet* 344

26. J. H. NELSON: A FORGOTTEN ADMINISTRATOR-HISTORIAN OF INDIA *J. D. M. Derrett* 354

27. WRITINGS ON THE MUTINY *S. N. Sen* 373

28. THE ADMINISTRATORS AND HISTORICAL WRITING ON INDIA *E. T. Stokes* 385

29. BRITISH HISTORICAL WRITING IN THE ERA OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS *T. G. P. Spear* 404

30. NATIONALIST HISTORIANS *R. C. Majumdar* 416

31. THE ROLE OF BANKIMCANDRA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISM *T. W. Clark* 429

(B) *Writings in the Indigenous Languages*

32. MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING IN BENGALI *A. R. Mallick* 446

33. MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING IN HINDI *H. L. Singh* 461

34. MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING IN MARATHI *V. G. Dighe* 473

35. HISTORICAL WRITING IN URDU: A SURVEY OF TENDENCIES *A. B. M. Habibullah* 481

INDEX 497

INTRODUCTION

THE NATURE OF THE INVESTIGATION

Although setting out to study the work of historians of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon on a prearranged and agreed plan, the contributors of the following papers did not start from, and did not arrive at, a common definition of what they understood by the history of historical writing. This was perhaps to be expected, for to a remarkable degree the modern study of the history of the sub-continent of India has developed within a two-dimensional framework, preoccupied with men and events and neglectful of intellectual history and of the influence of ideas. So to speak the warp and woof of historical material is there, but we see it flat, lacking a three-dimensional view of the folds, creases and convolutions of the cloth of history. Historians who have devoted themselves to the study of the peoples of the sub-continent have shown little self-awareness, and little tendency to evaluate the work of their predecessors so that the student seeks in vain for even a single published article in which the character of their work is examined.[1]

With this assessment in mind it is evident that the papers here printed and the discussion which they provoked have created a new, enlarged, three-dimensional framework within which the history of the peoples of South Asia may be written.

These papers in their range and diversity go far to illustrate the wide scope of the modern study of historical writing. As in the German historical schools of the eighteenth century, which opened up this general field of inquiry, they occasionally include, in encyclopaedic fashion, lists of authors and their works or chronicles of books, rather like expanded bibliographies, but for the most part the contributors have adopted the more sophisticated form of analysing the influences that have shaped historical writing and research. Several, for example, have indicated the general significance for the historian of the creation in the late nineteenth century of research institutes in Western India, which collected and published the correspondence of Marāthā families, or of the foundation of learned societies like the Asiatic Society in Bengal, or of the recent publication of historical journals like *Itihāsa* (*History*) of Calcutta, or of the opening within the last century of official archives in India and in Europe. Most of the papers, however, investigate the work of a chosen historian or the treatment of a specific subject by a succession of historians. The papers entitled *Writings on the Mutiny* and *Historiography of the Ancient Indian Social Order* provide examples of the usefulness of tracing the ways in which a subject under historical treatment can grow and alter, and those entitled *Notes on W. H. Moreland as Historian* and *The Kashmir Chronicle* reveal that a new understanding of the character and direction of a writer's work may be gained not only from a survey of his total writings but also by simultaneous reference to his life and times. Equally revealing is the process of examining, as, for example, in the papers on imperialist and nationalist writings, the contribution of groups of historians who are linked together in that they have analysed, often from radically different standpoints, some of the great modern political movements which have powerfully influenced Asia. In these papers in particular contributors have found that little progress in the analysis of historical writing is to be made without a basic understanding and awareness of the nature of value judgements.

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[1] In the period since the conference was held and since the above was written, two pioneer works of importance in the study of Indian historiography have been published, both by members of the conference: *The Utilitarians and India* by Professor E. Stokes (1958) and *The Historians of Medieval India* by Dr. P. Hardy (1960).

Among the more difficult studies to undertake are those which explore the underlying, often concealed or unconsciously held, assumptions of individual writers. A comparison of the standpoints of James Mill and Mountstuart Elphinstone, for instance, demands an analysis of group and national prejudice and of fundamental psychological, philosophical, and cosmological differences.

This particular comparison is the more rewarding in that these two writers belong to influential British schools of historical thought, the utilitarian and romantic respectively, and a study of their historical work therefore throws new light on these schools. Very few of the modern historians whom we have studied can be placed in this way and only rarely, as for example with Mill and Alfred Lyall, is their work to be understood in terms of a governing philosophy or theory of historical interpretation. Most of them have confined their histories rather narrowly to an account of men and events, more often than not using the past in order to illumine the present, and therefore have kept at least one eye firmly fixed on the current development of government policies. They have usually regarded history as a backward projection of present politics.

It would be misleading to assume that the character of the work of an historian is always to be explained through the study of external influences playing upon him. Obviously the intrinsic nature and philosophy of an historian may in varying degree open or close his mind to external influences. What is noteworthy, however, about the modern western writers treated in these pages is that they show so little awareness of the main, contemporary, currents of western thought, and of the changing character of western historical scholarship. Further study may well modify this view, for the present volume is far from comprehensive, scarcely touching on, for example, such well-known historians as Lane Poole, Jadunath Sarkar, and Kaye. In the periods and subjects studied the contributors have also not found it rewarding to pay much attention to Marxist writing or to the influence of Marxist thought, but the growing maturity of historical writing in the indigenous languages of South Asia, and the increasing attention now being paid in the Soviet Union and China to the history of Asia, will no doubt in future draw more attention to these aspects.

Those who took part in the conference emerged from the study and discussion of these papers with a heightened awareness of their common heritage as historians and a fresh appreciation of their own particular standpoints. They were able in consequence to take a stereoscopic view of the history of the peoples of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, and to envisage the past in terms not so much of a national battleground as of a common historical process. If as a result they write in future with a clearer understanding of the nature of objectivity it will probably be because they now know not only what they stand for but where they stand.

Historians of the peoples of the sub-continent have in the past operated rather like isolated guerrilla fighters in a jungle, often performing feats of individual brilliance, but lacking discipline and only vaguely aware of the part they should play in a general campaign. The papers presented to this conference have enabled us for the first time to survey the size and nature of the jungle itself, to establish and affirm the nature of our common discipline and to cut a few broad paths along which we may move with more certainty, direction and co-operation. In short they enable us to begin to establish a pattern of growth of the subject.

We now perceive, for example, that undue emphasis has probably been placed in the past on political, constitutional, and administrative aspects of South Asian history, and too little on economic, social, and cultural development and on the history of ideas. The prevailing tendency has also been to view India's history from the centre and through the eyes of the central government, neglecting the development of society in the provinces, districts, and towns. In this context a fresh appraisal of the more important and urgent work to be done can now be made. Above all we have come to appreciate that in their urgent task of creating a stronger sense of historical consciousness the new nations of the sub-continent will need more trained historians, and that in the thin years immediately ahead, when their nation-building services will continue to absorb all the trained men and women who can be found, it is a primary responsibility of historians and university departments of history in western countries to help to train and to encourage and support their Indian, Pakistani, and Ceylonese colleagues. We look forward to the day when with growing maturity they will investigate and describe for the benefit of mankind their view of the history not only of their own and the other countries of Asia but also of the rest of the world.

IDEAS OF HISTORY IN THE EARLY EMPIRES AND LITERATURES

The first four papers printed here effectively dispose of the view, which from time to time is given fresh currency, that the Hindu peoples of ancient India had no sense of history, but in doing so they rightly draw attention to the remarkable dearth of historical writing in the period down to the close of the first millennium A.D. We cannot but be struck by the absence in the voluminous general and religious literature of the period not only of manuscripts of ancient historical works but also of references to them. Although the two major exceptional, extant historical works, the Kashmir Chronicle of Kalhaṇa and the Ceylon Chronicle, emerged from the peripheral regions of the sub-continent it would be hazardous to assume as some writers have done that many important manuscripts of an historical character, produced in the main centres of ancient north India, had been destroyed by later invaders. No doubt much was destroyed but we have no reason to suppose that works of history were singled out for destruction.

Despite the lack of a solid body of historical literature it is possible to trace in rough outline the changing ideas of history in ancient India. In the first millennium A.D. the Brāhmans composed a class of literature known as *Purāṇas*, based on collations of much earlier material, diverse in form and including, for example, in the sections called *Itihāsa*, many king-lists and comprehensive references to traditions and institutions. All these writings rest on the fundamental assumption that the universe changes through enormous cycles of time, and against this background they inculcate the supreme lesson of history for man as *śānta-rasa*, the sentiment of calm resignation, thus conveying a radically different historical sense from that to be found, for example, in Jewish, Christian, or Muslim writings. Early Buddhist and Jain writings in India reveal the influence of this tradition but, like the work of Christians and Muslims whose faiths also gathered round an historical founder, they show a keener biographical and chronological sense. The growth of sects each appealing for justification to original authority, best illustrated perhaps in the Buddhist *Mahāvaṃsa* chronicle of Ceylon, confirmed and deepened these tendencies. On the whole therefore we find that the Buddhist tradition is more historically reliable than the Purāṇic.

A significant change in the sense of history is to be found in the *kāvya* writings in the period beginning about the time of the Christian era. In this highly polished form of literature the earlier *itihāsa* traditions are rewritten and reinterpreted and in the process historical truth slowly becomes absorbed and dominated by aesthetics. History becomes legend. Throughout the first millennium A.D. this process continued, and we find, for example, that the historical data in the Prākrit inscriptions of the period before the second century A.D. are more accurate than in the later Sanskritic inscriptions, and that in Pāli literature, where both earlier and later accounts of the same events exist, the earlier are the more accurate. As may be seen in the *Mahāvaṃsa* chronicle of Ceylon, contemporary records are later often transformed by artistic treatment and in effect a continual shift from history into legend takes place.

Among these early writings both the Kashmir and Ceylon chronicles are exceptional in their sense of sustained narrative, but the former is unique in early Hindu-Buddhist writings in its degree of historical awareness. We know that many Hindu courts kept archives and genealogical records but the custom appears to have been best maintained in the compact, clearly demarcated region of Kashmir. In this environment Kalhaṇa, the author of *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, wrote as an historian-poet of the twelfth-century state of Kashmir, recording and analysing what he could glean from earlier chroniclers and from his father and fellow-courtiers, and working the whole into a detailed political account for the benefit of his contemporaries. With some critical awareness he seeks, as he says, 'to give a connected account of what had become fragmentary'.

Kalhaṇa's long poem propagates the political merits of benevolent despotism compared with the drawbacks of existing feudal rivalries, and superficially may therefore be interpreted simply as a call for reform. But underlying all that he says is his orthodox Brāhmanical view that the world is immensely old and in decline, that things are impermanent, that superhuman forces have the largest influence in shaping man, and that man's proper course is to accept and encourage the sentiment of resignation. It is likely that, as Professor Basham says, 'Kalhaṇa's attitude to history would have been shared by most educated men in medieval Hindu India.'

Contact with peoples possessing a stronger historical sense than is discernible in India, for example, with the Islamic, Central Asian, and Chinese peoples, may well have encouraged the growth of historical writing in Kashmir. Certainly the Muslim conquerors of north India, who between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries established the Sultanate of Delhi, had a keen sense of history, continually refreshed from Arab, Turkish, and Persian sources and expressed in numerous writings in Persian. Their historical and other literatures formed a cultural import differing little in subject-matter or idiom from already established forms of historical writing in the Muslim countries outside India, and perhaps for this reason display little interest in Hindu life.

Muslim historians of the Sultanate period in India, like their brethren elsewhere, wrote in the conviction that true religion is to be found in the authoritative guidance of the divinely revealed Qur'ān. They assumed, so to speak, that an ideal history of the Muslims was laid up in heaven and that their primary task was to illustrate this history, treating their source materials as authorities to be cited rather than questioned or interpreted. They conceived of history not as a process but rather as a sequence of events, often isolated and without obvious relationship, to which meaning was given by God. With their gaze firmly fixed on Muhammad as the founder of their religion, their historical perspective was finite and linear, radically different therefore from that of the Hindus, and their sense of chronology, like that of early Christian writers, correspondingly more precise. In Muslim historiography in India we are able to trace not only, as with the Hindus and Buddhists, their changing sense of history but also the individual contribution of many important writers.

Most Muslim historians in India were courtiers or officials writing on the orders of their rulers or in the expectation of gaining their patronage. As good Muslims they adopted a pious, didactic purpose in revealing the ways of God to men and as good subjects they set up their rulers as agents or symbols of the divine purpose. By recording the good and bad deeds of the rulers, the Muslim community as a whole and the rulers in particular were to be encouraged, advised and warned.

In the seven centuries of Muslim rule in northern India the character of politics and economic life underwent no sudden or radical change, and it is to be expected that within the co-ordinates of their religion and environment the nature of their historical writing should display a continuous, conservative development. As was customary among Muslim writers, general histories of Islam were produced in India beginning with the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī* in the Sultanate period and developing later in the writings of Nizām-ud-dīn Ahmad, Badāonī and Ferishta. Gradually, as was perhaps to be expected, a regional and domestic Muslim sense emerged, reinforced by the deliberate policy of Akbar in severing connections with the outer Muslim world, and their writers turned from the consideration of the Muslim *umma* or community in histories of Islam to the description in increasingly specialized works of the activities of the Muslims in India.

The Mughal period in India was the age of official histories. Muslim rulers had long been in the habit of commissioning works from their officials, giving them access for this purpose to the state archives, and the growing scope and detail of official Mughal material induced the large Mughal bureaucracy to write numerous studies of an administrative, military, and topographical character, notably the *Ā'īn-i-Akbarī*. By comparison with the earlier chroniclers who were preoccupied by the religious significance of events, the Mughal historians begin to show a developing interest in persons. Biographical works and collections of official correspondence appeared in which, no doubt as a reflection of the cosmopolitan character of the Mughal court, a distinctly humanist flavour may be discerned.

HISTORICAL WRITINGS IN THE PERIOD OF EUROPEAN DOMINANCE AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

The Portuguese chroniclers who recorded the voyages and activities in the Orient of Vasco da Gama and his fellow Portuguese and the Muslim writers who described the conquest of India by Bābur and the Mughals were alike in that they viewed history as an aspect of theology. Between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, while the concept of Muslim historiography in India underwent little change, the study of history in Europe emerged as a distinctive, independent discipline. The character of Muslim writing in India and of European writing on India therefore sharply diverged. The discovery, exploration and conquest of maritime Asia by the European nations transformed the character of their own writings on Asia, producing at once a greater and more diversified flow of work, and new, dominant attitudes, politically rather than theologically motivated, which derived from the growth of the idea of progress in Europe.

Moreover, as the emphasis in each European country's relations with the East passed from trade to conquest so its writers, especially its historians, no longer rested content with general descriptions of places and peoples but sought rather to influence government policy by publishing work of a politically didactic character. Within each nation in this process two main schools of thought tended to emerge: in Britain, for example, we find both conservative and liberal groups, in France associationists and assimilationists, in the Netherlands liberals and 'culturists', each taking for granted European supremacy and the colonial system and differing from its national rival on the policy and method of government within the system; and in the instance of Britain in India in the twentieth century differing also on the speed and timing of the transfer of power.

Among British historians of India the beginning of this dichotomy is to be found in the work of James Mill and Mountstuart Elphinstone. Although both accepted the superiority of British over Indian rule, Mill wrote to assert the importance of utilitarianism in government and the power of government and law to change people, and Elphinstone simply to describe the political story and nature of Indian society before and after the British conquest. Detesting Mill's doctrinaire, philosophical approach Elphinstone set out to refute it. We now know, what perhaps Elphinstone himself only dimly perceived, that Mill's philosophy and approach rested on a basically different psychological outlook from that of Elphinstone; Mill assuming that everywhere human nature is the same and is therefore capable of being changed in the same ways and brought to the same level by the application of government and law, and that it was the historian's primary task to demonstrate this; Elphinstone accepting the opposed view that human nature may differ in different parts of the world and that the historian's first duty was to describe rather than to evaluate these differences.

Both Mill and Elphinstone along with other British historians were writing of course for a limited circle of British readers and so long as this situation obtained, that is to say down to the close of the nineteenth century, British writing on India was bound to have a self-centred character. This was also true of other European nations, and, for example, in Portuguese, Dutch, and French writing respectively the interest shown in their national activities, especially their national heroes in Asia, varies in proportion to the progress of national conquest and policy. This self-centredness is to be detected as much in European studies of pre-European Asia as in European studies of their own activities in Asia. The Indian past, for instance, was assumed to be much like the European present and European categories of thought, not only in the field of history, were automatically applied. Moreover, as the idea of progress became identified with the extension of western influence throughout the world this Europocentric view became characteristic also of western historians generally, whatsoever their field of inquiry.

Most British historians of India made little attempt to correlate the history of Britain with the process of events in India under the British, or with other extra-British history, or to place the Indo-British relationship within a broad concept of historical development. Alfred Lyall, Henry Maine and William Hunter were exceptional, for example, in treating the establishment of British dominion in India as an inseparable part and the latest example of a prolonged interaction of western and eastern forces. Most writers tended to give the history of British India significance in so far as it was held to teach Government some practical lessons for the future handling of affairs. Moreover, by concentrating on the nuclear significance of British political and administrative activities in India and neglecting the study of the Indian responses they implied, too, that Indian society was backward and inward-looking, at best a lump of clay to be suitably moulded, and thus, often quite unwittingly, assisted in widening the cultural gulf between British and Indians. In this way British historians of India have tended to produce a divided, schizophrenic kind of history. However, the interest shown by writers like Maine, Hunter and Lyall in Indian institutions and society, combined with the growth in the twentieth century of a western-educated class of Indians and therefore of a new circle of writers and readers, and the achievement of Indian, Pakistani, and

Ceylon independence in 1947–8 did much to bridge the gulf and to evoke from both Asian and western writers new, more rounded and comprehensive views of their history.

In recent years the establishment in British universities, especially in London, of a group of historians, specializing in the study of Asian history, has also had the effect of bringing this branch of history more closely into touch with the longer established schools of western history. Fully familiar with the standards and trends of modern historical scholarship they direct their attention primarily to studying the development of the Asian peoples, regarding the period of western dominance as a comparatively short though important part of wider and deeper processes. Standing in line of descent from Elphinstone rather than Mill they seek to describe the past, to find out and set down what happened rather than to moralize on or evaluate the conduct and character of past generations of Asian and western peoples.

In the last half-century an increasing number of Indians have written of India's past in both their mother tongues and in English. Many of the best-known scholars like Professors R. C. Majumdar and S. N. Sen have published freely in both or have published first in English and subsequently have had their work translated into their mother tongue. As we have seen, Hindu writers had no strong indigenous historical tradition to look back to, and in any event many Hindu historians belong to the new urban, middle-class intelligentsia who, as for instance in Calcutta, themselves represent a break with tradition. Whether writing in their mother tongue or English they use the modern, widely accepted concepts of history and historical techniques and there is therefore little difference in character between their work in English and in the mother tongues.

In modern historical writing in the indigenous languages we discern as yet not so much the development of strong schools of history as the growth of political and historical consciousness.[2] This is true even of writing in Marāthī, which alone among the mother tongues has carried over from its seventeenth-century *bakhar* chronicles a fairly strong historical tradition. Historical tradition in Sinhalese is deep but is as yet little represented in modern historical writing. The relative paucity of historical writing in Hindi and Urdu may be accounted for by the fact that they are interregional languages, and therefore to some extent lack the drive and momentum of a strong, local consciousness. Muslim writers in Urdu have naturally shown a strong tendency to look for support and inspiration to the world of Islam outside India and along with Muslims writing in English have found it difficult to decide whether the Muslim's history

[2] In this respect Bankim Chandra Chatterji's writings, which set out to create a Bengali and Hindu sense of pride and unity through fostering a reverence for the ancient, classical past, are significant.

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belongs to Islam or to India. For them the prerequisite of writing history has been to re-define in religious terms their Muslim consciousness.

The achievement of independence by India, Pakistan and Ceylon has had the effect of making their peoples more clearly aware of the potential cultural importance both of their mother tongues and of English. The degree of maturity already achieved, reinforced by the conscious national policy of newly formed bodies like the Sahitya Akademi of New Delhi, will no doubt have the effect of increasing the flow and refining the intellectual character of historical work in the mother tongues. At the same time the leading younger historians of the sub-continent show every intention of continuing to publish in English and there are many good reasons to foster this process side by side and in a form intellectually consistent with that which may be published in the mother tongues.

PART I

IDEAS OF HISTORY IN THE EARLY EMPIRES AND LITERATURES

(A) *Ancient India*

1. IDEAS OF HISTORY IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

R. C. MAJUMDAR

Formerly Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Nagpur University.
Vice-President of the International Commission for a History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind set up by U.N.E.S.C.O.

Conceptions of History

It is a well-known fact that with the single exception of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (History of Kāshmīr) there is no historical text in Sanskrit dealing with the whole or even parts of India. But ideas of history and historical literature were not altogether lacking. Such literature, in an embryonic form, may be traced in the *Nārāśaṃsī* or hero-lauds which formed an essential feature in the preparatory ceremonies of the year-long celebration of horse-sacrifice. Ten days were devoted to this, 'whereby the nobility and great deeds of kings were sung by priest and warrior musicians . . . while the recitation of legends in verse accompanied various events of life'.[1]

The first definite and comprehensive pronouncement on *Itihāsa* or history is to be found in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya which is believed by many to have been written in the third century B.C., but may be of somewhat later date, about the beginning of the Christian era. The relevant passage is as follows: 'The three Vedas, Sāma, Rik and Yajus, constitute the triple Vedas. These together with Atharva-veda and the Itihāsa-veda are (known as) the Vedas.' (Bk. I, Ch. III.)[2]

In the next chapter but one, *Itihāsa* is defined as: 'Purāṇa, Itivṛtta, Ākhyāvikā, Udāharaṇa, Dharmaśāstra, and Arthaśāstra are (known by the name) Itihāsa.' (Bk. I, Ch. V.)

A careful consideration of these two passages leads to the following important conclusions:

1. *Itihāsa* was given a very high rank in the domain of knowledge. Its recognition as the fifth Veda invested it with almost a sacrosanct character, and in any case placed it higher than any other branch of literature that developed after the Veda.

2. Although the term '*Itihāsa*' is now regarded as equivalent to 'history', it was used at this period in a very different or rather more comprehensive sense.

3. *Itihāsa* included within its scope a variety of subjects specifically

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[1] *The Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge, 1922), i, 255.

[2] *Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra*, tr. by Shamasastry (Bangalore, 1915), pp. 7, 11.

named in the second passage. It is difficult to define precisely the original nature of each of these, but we may obtain a general idea by briefly discussing what was actually understood by them in ancient India:

i. The *Purāṇa* is the name of a well-known class of texts, traditionally eighteen in number, which did not assume their present form till long after the Christian era. But it is likely that they were all ultimately derived from, and were really various redactions of, one original *Purāṇa* text, or a genus of literature, in the nature of a compilation of tales, anecdotes, songs and lore that had come down through the ages. According to the tradition preserved in some of the existing *Purāṇa* texts, the original *Purāṇa* was compiled from these materials by Vyāsa who taught this and the *Itihāsa* to a disciple of his. After that he composed the *Mahābhārata*. So *Purāṇa* in the passage of *Arthaśāstra* quoted above, may be taken to denote tales and anecdotes handed down from old days, rather than a *Purāṇa* text of the existing type.

ii. *Itivṛtta* is translated by Shamasastry as 'history', but taken by Ganapati Sastri to mean the Epics.[3] This latter interpretation is opposed to the Purāṇic tradition which, as we have seen above, distinguishes *Itihāsa* from the Epics. *Itivṛtta* literally means occurrence or event, and possibly denotes the traditional account of men and things of the times that are past, and thus makes the nearest approach to what we understand now by history.

iii. *Ākhyāvikā* means anecdotes and stories, but as the *Purāṇa* also denotes the same thing, it must have some distinctive characteristics. Ganapati Sastri renders it as an account of divine and human beings.[4]

iv. *Udāharaṇa*, meaning example, most probably refers to typical stories, biographies or events which illustrated some important moral principles or political precepts. Ganapati Sastri's rendering[5]—*nyāya* and *mīmāṃsā*—is hardly acceptable.

v–vi. *Dharmaśāstra* and *Arthaśāstra*, though taken by Ganapati Sastri as the well-known texts of these two classes,[6] possibly refer to the subject-matter dealt with by them, rather than any specific texts.

It would thus appear that *Itihāsa*, as understood by Kauṭilya, not only included historical chronicles in the widest sense of the term, but many things more, and may be said to comprise almost all the topics concerning a man outside the sphere of religion. It seems to embrace the study not only of historical persons and events, but also of traditions concerning them, the political, social, moral and economic theories and their practical applications, legal usages and institutions, etc. The great epic *Mahābhārata*, in its extant form, closely corresponds to this type of *Itihāsa*.

That this comprehensive idea of *Itihāsa* persisted down to a very late age is indicated by two verses in the Jaina *Ādi Purāṇa* by Jinasena who flourished in the ninth century A.D. These verses may be translated as follows: '*Itihāsa* is a very desirable subject. According to tradition it relates "what actually happened". It is also described as *itivṛtta*, *aitihya*, and *āmnāya* (authentic tradition). It is also called *Ārsha* for it was composed by the ṛshis (sages), *Sūkta*, for it instructs through good and pleasant discourses, and *Dharmaśāstra*, for it prescribes *dharma* (religion or moral principles.'[7]

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[3] *Arthaśāstra*, ed. by Ganapati Sastri (Trivandrum, 1924), i, 35.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 36.

In the course of time some of the constituent elements of history such as the *Purāṇa*, *Arthaśāstra*, and *Dharmaśāstra* developed into independent subjects of study. The connotation of *Itihāsa* accordingly underwent a great change, and was practically narrowed down to a record of past events or occurrences. But still the influence of the old and comprehensive idea is clearly seen in the following standard definition of *Itihāsa*: 'Itihāsa means past events accompanied by or arranged in the form of stories (*kathāyuktam*), and conveying instruction in *dharma* (morals), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desire) and *mokṣa* (salvation)',[8] i.e. the four ultimate ends of a human being.

Collection of Materials

We may now proceed to discuss the attitude of the ancient Indians towards history, as properly understood today, viz. a true record of kings and historical events, arrived at by a correct appraisal of all available materials, and arranged in chronological order, with a description of the social, political, and economic conditions from age to age.

The first requisite for this was a framework of political history. The necessity or importance of this seems to have been fully realized even at a very early period. In any event we find that the idea of collecting materials for a chronicle of kings appealed to the Indians even in remote antiquity. This is evident from the functions of the *Sūtas* and *Māgadhas*, as explained in the *Purāṇas*. Thus the *Vāyu Purāṇa* says: 'The *Sūta*'s special duty, as perceived by good men of old, was to preserve the genealogies of gods, ṛshis (sages) and most glorious kings, and the traditions of great men, which are displayed by those who declare sacred lore in the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*.' The *Sūtas* are often classed with *Māgadhas*, and both of them are regarded as royal panegyrists, though in one passage the *Sūta* is called a *Paurāṇika*, and the *Māgadha* a genealogist. Both of them are said to have come into existence in the time of the legendary king Pṛthu. It is unnecessary for our present purpose to go into further details, but it is obvious that even in the most ancient days there was a separate class in society, whose function was to preserve chronicles of kings. Pargiter, who has gone into this question more deeply than others, has justly pointed out that the *Sūtas* were engaged in the task of collecting these genealogies of kings, traditions, and ballads about celebrated men, etc., and all these were exactly the material out of which the *Purāṇa*, or rather that portion of it which deals with political history, was constructed at a later date.[9] Some of these old genealogies have been preserved in the *Purāṇa* texts, but many have been lost. Pargiter has drawn up a comparative table of the lists of kings of twenty different dynasties given in the different *Purāṇas*.[10] The list begins with Manu, from whom descended all the kings throughout India, and comes down, after about one hundred generations, to historical times. In some cases the names of nearly all the hundred kings are preserved fairly well, but in others there are many gaps. The list is continued, in some cases, even after this, and in the case of Magadha it is brought down to the period just before the commencement of the Imperial Guptas. We also possess similar lists of kings, with regnal periods, of important dynasties like the Sātavāhanas. Wherever we can check these lists with the help of independent data—and this is true only of the period after 500 B.C. —we find that the lists were based on genuine records, though errors, sometimes of a serious nature, crept in in course of time. The discrepancies among the various *Purāṇas*, and sometimes among the different manuscripts of one and the same *Purāṇa*, indicate that these errors were largely due to copyists of *Purāṇa* texts.

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[7] *Adi Purāṅa*, I, 24–5.

[8] The verse is quoted in the *Sanskrit–English Dictionary* (*s.v.* Itihāsa), by V. S. Apte, second edition (Bombay, 1912).

From the time of the Imperial Guptas, such lists disappear from our literary records save those noted below. Several circumstances account for this. In the first place the proper organization of royal archives probably made the work of the *Sūtas* redundant, and in any case they ceased to function in their old capacity. It is clearly stated that the *Sūtas* now took to two other occupations, namely (1) employment with a Kṣatriya in connection with chariots, elephants, and horses, and (2) medicine.

That the royal archives kept the genealogical list is quite clear from epigraphic records where we get stereotyped lists of kings of some dynasties for generations together, and in some cases, with regnal years, exactly as in the *Purāṇas*. But the royal archives, which shared the fortunes of the royal dynasties, were liable to destruction more often and more completely than the accounts of the *Sūtas*. For these *Sūtas* were many in number, and several members of the class would do the work in their own ways (like the authors of *Kulajis* in medieval Bengal), and these would be copied by their successive generations. Further, these accounts, written on small palm-leaves, easily portable from one place to another, were preserved in humble cottages, less likely to suffer destruction from political causes than palaces or big chancelleries, and being private properties were likely to be more cared for than official records, particularly when they ceased to be of any practical use. A stage of further degradation in the position of the *Sūtas* is reflected in the *Manu Smṛti* which says that the *Sūtas* and *Māgadhas* were low castes, born of Kṣatriya fathers and Brāhmaṇa mothers, i.e. offspring of the condemned *pratiloma* marriage, and they are classed with the despised *Caṇḍalas*. The management of horses and chariots was the occupation of the *Sūtas*, and trade that of the *Māgadhas*.

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[9] F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* (London, 1922), p. 15.

[10] Ibid., p. 144.

Secondly, the *Purāṇas* came to be regarded as sacred books of hoary antiquity, and the inclusion of new royal genealogies was stopped, probably because they would be regarded as signs of modernity and thus take away the ancient and sacred character of these works. Though, therefore, some *Sūtas* might still record the genealogies, these would lose their importance and, not being included in the *Purāṇas*, would cease to be cared for and gradually be lost.

But the idea of keeping regular chronicles of kings did not altogether disappear in India, and we find the practice continued in Nepāl, Kāshmīr, Gujarāt and a few other places.

The *Vaṃśāvalīs* of Nepāl are replicas of Purāṇic genealogical lists, and some at least of the old works from which Kalhaṇa derived material for his history were probably of the same character. The Jain *Prabandhas* and historical works, quite large in number, vouch for the existence of the same type of chronicles in Gujarāt. There were probably similar chronicles in Sindh, on which *Chachnāma* was based, and the Assam *Buranjis* of a later period partook of the same character. It may be pure accident, but it is none the less very curious, that this old practice should continue only in the outlying districts of Northern India. This was, no doubt, partly due to the fact that Nepāl, Kāshmīr, Gujarāt and Assam, where such chronicles have been actually preserved, were precisely the localities which suffered the least destruction from the ravages of Muslim invasions, and therefore were able to preserve what was lost in other places due to this calamity. There may be other reasons also. But in any case it is obvious that the old tradition of keeping chronicles of kings was not altogether lost in India.

The existence of such chronicles is indirectly proved by casual references in literature to kings of various ages and countries, by way of illustrating some ethical principles of political doctrines such as we find for example in the Kauṭilīya *Arthaśāstra*, *Harṣa-carita*, and other works. As many of these royal names and events recorded about them are not to be found in the *Purāṇas*, Epics, and other books, the knowledge was presumably derived from such chronicles.

Other Historical Records

But it is not merely the genealogy and chronicles of kings, but also other materials of history that received due attention from Indians. This is clear from the duties assigned to the *Gopa* in the Kauṭilīya *Arthaśāstra*. As an official in charge of five to ten villages, it was his duty to keep a record of everything concerning a village including its trade and agricultural products. He had to register the total number of the inhabitants in each village, specifying the caste and profession of each, and also to 'keep an account of the number of young and old men that reside in each house, their history (*carita*), occupation, income and expenditure'. These registers were regularly checked by other officers who independently collected information through spies.[11] These materials would supply invaluable data for the purpose of social and economic history.

Such a genuine anxiety on the part of the state to keep historical records in a proper manner is also vouched for by Hsüan Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, who travelled for nearly fifteen years almost all over India, during the first half of the seventh century A.D. In the course of his general description of India he observes: 'With respect to the records of events, each province has its own official for preserving them in writing. The record of these events in their full character is called Ni-lo-pi-cha. In these records are mentioned good and evil events, with calamities and fortunate occurrences.'[12]

Historical Biographies

Akin to chronicles, but differing from them both in object and spirit, as well as in literary forms, are the biographies of famous kings written by contemporaries. The most famous specimens are *Harṣa-carita* in prose, and *Gauḍa-~~vaho~~*, *Navasāhasāṅka-carita*, *Vikramāṅka deva-carita*, *Kumārapāla-carita*, *Rāma-carita*, *Pṛthvī-rāja-vijaya*, *Somapāla-vilāsa*, and a host of other works in verse. These contain valuable materials for history, but can hardly claim the rank of historical works. For, in the first place, the object steadily kept in view by these authors was to eulogize, rather than to give a true and impartial account of, the kings who were in most cases their patrons. Secondly, the authors cared more for literary effect than a delineation of facts, and hence their work was dominated by irrelevant topics or objects of minor importance which proved more susceptible to poetic treatment and literary embellishment than dry historical facts and events. The *Harṣa-carita*, for example, though written in prose, contains mostly rhetorical descriptions and literary embellishments, and though it consists of more than 250 printed pages, it covers only the first few months of the reign of Harṣa, and all the events of any historical importance contained in this work would not take more than a dozen pages, and hardly even that. The next three works mentioned above are undoubtedly more historical in character, though suffering from the same defects. The four other works show still further progress in historical conception. Among these, *Rāma-carita* (twelfth century A.D.) is undoubtedly the best from the historical point of view. Although, as its name implies, it was primarily intended to be a biography of Rāmapāla, it gives a brief account of his two predecessors and successors. Excluding the artificiality of the style, in which each verse is made to have two entirely different meanings, it may be regarded as a good specimen of historical work delineating contemporary events without much unnecessary embellishment. It describes in detail the great rebellion against the Pālas, of which we know practically nothing from any other source. Though extremely limited in character, both in regard to time and locality, it is a fairly good specimen of objective treatment of history.

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[11] R. Shamasastry, op. cit., pp. 178–9.

[12] *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, tr. by S. Beal (London, 1906), i, 78. Slightly different is the translation of Watters (*On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (London, 1904), i, 154).

The *Kumārapāla-carita*, a more extensive work, gives a good account of the Caulukyas, especially of Kumārapāla. But it was written to illustrate the rules of Sanskrit and Prākrit grammar, and contains long moral and religious discourses, typically Jaina in character.

We have not only biographies of kings, but also of other important historical personages. Typical examples are furnished by the *Kīrtikaumudī* of Someśvaradeva, and *Sukṛtasaṃkīrtana* of Arisiṃha, both of which delineate the life and character of Vastupāla, the minister of Gujarāt (thirteenth century A.D.). In the introductory portion Someśvaradeva gives a brief account of the Caulukya rulers from Mūlarāja, the founder of the dynasty (tenth century), up to his own time.

Collection of Historical Narratives

Another class of works making a nearer approach to history is the *Prabandha* or a collection of historical narratives. The best specimen is perhaps the *Prabandha-cintāmaṇi* (Wishing-stone of narratives) by Merutuṅga, composed in A.D. 1306. It devotes a short section each to a large number of topics, and many of these deal with well-known kings. Some of the prefatory remarks of the author are significant for our present purpose. By way of explaining his object in writing this work, he remarks: 'Ancient stories, because they have been so often heard, do not delight so much the minds of the wise; therefore I compose this work out of the life-histories of men not far removed from my own time.'[13] Equally interesting is his statement that the materials of his work were collected from a number of prose narratives, exceeding a hundred, and that he was assisted in this work by Dharmadeva. More significant is the concluding verse in the introductory portion. Though somewhat obscure it seems to imply that since many different persons wrote on the same topics, there are bound to be differences among them, but the author has tried to select the best views and hence does not deserve condemnation from those who happened to take a different view.[14]

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[13] Tr. by C. H. Tawney (Calcutta, 1901), p. 2.

These statements undoubtedly indicate a truly historical mind, but unfortunately the work itself cannot be regarded as of great historical value. For example, in his account of historical persons like Lakṣmaṇasena and Jayacandra, he only mentions some silly stories about them. He tells us a mythical story to explain the success of the Yavanas (Muslims) against the latter, but makes no reference to the defeat and flight of the former. What is more strange, he does not even mention the sack of Somanātha. When he composed his work, Alā'-ud-dīn Khiljī had begun his career of conquest, and had already overrun Gujarāt. But there is no echo of these momentous events in his voluminous work.

Collections of biographies of Jaina teachers form another type of historical literature found in Gujarāt. The best specimens are Hemacandra's *Pariśiṣṭaparvan* (twelfth century) and the *Prabhāvaka-carita* (thirteenth century), which incidentally refer to names of kings and events of their reign.

The Method of Writing History

The existence of the works referred to in the last two sections does, to a certain extent, blunt the edge of the reproach frequently directed against Sanskrit literature, that, with the single exception of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, there is to be found in it no work meriting the title of history.[15] This view, expressed by C. H. Tawney, merely echoes the opinion by Bühler in a letter written to Nöldeke in 1877. Referring to some of the works mentioned above, he says, 'You are a little behind the age with your notion that the Indians have no historical literature. In the last twenty years, five fairly voluminous works have been discovered, emanating from authors contemporary with the events which they describe.'[16]

While there is a great deal of truth in these statements, it should be clearly pointed out that the works under review do not reach the standard which entitles them to be ranked as 'historical' in the proper sense of the term. They are limited in their objects, eulogistic in character, rhetorical or poetic in style, and aiming more at edification and entertainment than a statement of positive facts. While biographies are mostly panegyrics, the main objects of the Jain chronicles 'were to edify the Jain community (and) to convince them of the glory and power of the Jain religion'.[17] But there are good grounds for believing that a true conception of history and the correct method of writing it were not altogether unknown in India. This is proved by the remarkable utterances of Kalhaṇa, by way of introductory remarks, at the commencement of his justly famous historical work *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. The mission of a historian, says he, is to 'make vivid before one's eyes pictures of a bygone age' (v. 4).[18] In this respect history is more potent than the mythical ambrosia, for while the latter gives immortality to a single individual (who drinks it), a true history immortalizes a number of great men as well as the historian (v. 3).[19] Kalhaṇa had a highly developed, almost modern, conception of the proper data or sources of history. He not only made a thorough study of all previous writings on the history of Kāshmīr, but also consulted the original sources. 'By the inspection', says he, 'of ordinances (*śāsana*) of former kings relating to religious foundations and grants, laudatory inscriptions (*praśasti-paṭṭa*) as well as written records (*śāstra*), all wearisome error has been set at rest.'[20] There is evidence to show that he studied coins and old monuments,[21] two other well-known sources of history.

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[14] Durgasankar Sastri's Edition (Bombay), p. i.

[15] Tawney, op. cit., p. v.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., p. vi.

Kalhaṇa held that the first requisite of a true historian was to keep a detached mind, free from bias and prejudices. A historian, like a judge, says he, must discard love (*rāga*) and hatred (*dveṣa*) while recounting the events of the past, and he adds that such a writer alone deserves praise (v. 7).

Above all, Kalhaṇa had the supreme merit of possessing a critical mind and that spirit of scepticism which is the first virtue of a historian. He questioned the veracity of past historians, and examined their statements in the light of available evidence culled from the various sources mentioned above. He found fault with the pedantic style of Suvrata, who had acquired celebrity by epitomizing the voluminous works containing the early history of the kings of Kāshmīr; he corrected the errors which Kṣemendra committed in his 'List of Kings' owing to an incomprehensible lack of care; and he scrutinized eleven works of former savants containing the annals of kings, as well as the views of the sage Nīla (vv. 11–14).

In conclusion he states the objective of his work which, in his opinion, was presumably also the objective of all historical works. 'This saga,' he says, 'which is properly made up should be useful for kings as a stimulant or as a sedative, like a physic, according to time and place' (v. 21). A wrong interpretation of this verse by Bühler led to much misunderstanding and undeserved condemnation of Kalhaṇa, but there seems to be little doubt that what Kalhaṇa means is that kings, both good and bad, should derive great profit from his great work. The fate of many kings narrated in it should teach healthy lessons to future kings whose success and prosperity make them insolent and overbearing; the fate of others should give hope and consolation to those who suffered defeat or were depressed by natural calamities or other adversities.[22]

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[18] Tr. by R. S. Pandit (Allahabad, 1935).

[19] Ibid. (Cf. translation and comment in footnotes.)

[20] Ibid.

[21] A. B. Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1920), p. 162.

[22] Cf. footnotes to Pandit's Translation.

This detailed reference to Kalhaṇa would indicate that Indians possessed most advanced views on the ideals of history and the proper method of writing it. His anxiety for a critical appraisal of existing works in the light of original sources, including archival and epigraphic records, would do credit to a historian of the twentieth century. The solicitude shown by him for an impartial outlook on the events of history, like that of a judge and not a lawyer, is one of the most remarkable traits in his character. The value of this can be judged if we remember that even in the eighteenth century A.D., Johnson, one of the greatest intellects of England, when composing Parliamentary Debates, saw to it 'that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it'.[23] Kalhaṇa's ideal of history, *viz.*, a vivid representation of the past with its great role as an instructor of future generations, was not perhaps an individual opinion but really a general view. This may be presumed from his confident exclamation, 'What man of culture is there to whose heart such a connected narrative dealing with innumerable incidents of the remote past will not appeal?'[24] Incidentally it proves a general appreciation of historical literature.

The actual performance of a writer hardly ever comes up to his own ideal, and Kalhaṇa was no exception to this rule. Imbued as we are with modern rational ideas, we are struck by his many failings and imperfections. It is easy to draw a line between the first three chapters and the rest of the work. The earlier kings dealt with in the first three chapters were mostly mythical or legendary, and even where historical persons were concerned Kalhaṇa had evidently no reliable material for their history. If he had been true to the principles he himself preached and largely acted upon in subsequent chapters, he would have pleaded his ignorance and omitted their accounts. Instead, he has accepted the old traditions, even to the absurd length of assigning a reign of three hundred years to a single king. This is probably due, not so much to his lack of critical spirit as to a blind faith in the Epics and *Purāṇas*, and consequently to the old traditions contained in them, the truth or falsity of which could not be tested by any positive evidence. The orthodox belief in the sanctity of the *Dvāpara* Age, to which the normal rules of the *Kali* Age do not apply, had possibly something to do with this abnormal attitude of Kalhaṇa. But whatever may be the true explanation, the fact is there, and the best possible apology for the author has been expressed by S. P. Pandit in the following words:

> 'Probably Kalhaṇa himself did not expect or even desire that the same credence should be given to the whole of his narrative in all its details in the first three *Taraṅgas* (chapters) which he expected as of right in favour of the dates and events of the subsequent, and especially the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth *Taraṅgas*. He clearly indicates now and

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[23] Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (London, 1900), i, 103.

[24] V. 22, Pandit's Translation.

then, that as we go back towards antiquity the story becomes more and more traditional and then even legendary, and that as you approach modern times it assumes a truly historical character with as correct details as you can expect in a work of the kind based upon materials like those which were available to him.'[25]

Modern historians may easily point to several other defects of a general nature which influence even the later portions which are otherwise so admirable. These may be briefly summed up as belief in witchcraft and magic feats, occasional explanation of events as due to the influence of fate or wrath of gods rather than to any rational cause, and a general didactic tendency inspired by Hindu views of doctrines of *karma* and transmigration. But it must be noted that most of these failings he shares in common with practically all the historians of medieval ages. Lastly, in common with most of them, Kalhaṇa subscribed to the view that even a historical text must be a work of art. He exercised his undoubted poetical talents of a very high quality in order to make his work attractive to readers, but his wonderful moderation in this respect would be clearly manifest to anyone who compares the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, from this point of view, with *Harṣa-carita*, *Gauḍa-vaho*, and *Vikramāṅka deva-carita*. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* certainly does not conform to the modern notion that history should be written on strictly scientific lines without any consideration of its literary representation. But this ideal, which was prominently put forward only a century ago, is already losing favour, and a gradually increasing number hold the view that history should be both a science and an art—scientific in its method of interpreting materials and making inferences, but artistic in the representation of the results of such study. Kalhaṇa may be said to have followed this standard, so far at least as his last five chapters are concerned, which cover nearly five-sixths of his entire work.

These chapters more or less conform to the high ideals preached by Kalhaṇa, subject to the general defects mentioned above. A spirit of detachment in judging of men and events, and an attempt to be strictly impartial are clearly manifest in his denunciation of the follies and crimes of his ideal king, Lalitāditya, and in delineating the wicked character and cruelties of Harṣa under whom his own father served as minister. His accuracy of historical details, a sound knowledge of topography, and vigorous delineation of the character of historical personages, would do credit to any distinguished historian, even of the present age. On the whole, considering both his merits and defects, even a modern historian should have little hesitation in ranking Kalhaṇa as a great historian, one that would easily take his place among the very best that the world could show before the nineteenth century, barring only such great geniuses as

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[25] Introduction to *Gauḍa-vaho*. Quoted by R. S. Pandit, op. cit., p. 599.

Thucydides and Polybius, who stand apart and above the general class of historians even of their own countries.

Ideas of History

Having surveyed the different types of history we are now in a position to discuss the general problem concerning ideas of history in ancient India. As we have seen above, the idea of history, as a branch of knowledge, was at the beginning a very comprehensive one, but gradually some of its important aspects developed into separate and independent subjects like *Arthaśāstra*, *Dharmaśāstra*, and *Purāṇa*. That part of it which was concerned with genealogy and chronicles of kings, and events of a political nature, and thus makes the nearest approach to our modern conception of history, became by itself an independent subject, under such names as *Itivṛtta*, *Itihāsa*, etc. It is highly likely that separate works, dealing with this subject alone, existed in ancient times, but we have no actual specimen of such works, and all that we know of them has survived only as a chapter in the extensive *Purāṇa* texts, whose authors must have freely drawn upon these works. So far as can be judged from these extant summaries the historical works were more or less of the nature of chronicles which recorded the names of kings and their regnal years, and gave brief accounts of the events associated with their reigns. There were good collections of materials for compiling such chronicles, and even though the general practice of writing such political histories gradually declined, it never disappeared altogether. This is proved by the long royal genealogies contained in epigraphic records and some literary works, especially biographies of historical persons. Local chronicles have also been preserved in some parts of India, mostly outlying districts like Nepāl and Gujarāt.

We have thus definite proof of the existence of materials for political history. Of the other aspects of history, such as social and economic conditions of the people, we have reference to the collection of useful data for this purpose, and even incidental references to their utilization in treatises like Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, but there is no systematic book on the subject.

Not only were there materials for history, but the method of working them into a systematic treatise was not unknown either. Of course the method was very defective in many respects. The myths and legends were not always distinguished from historical facts, and not infrequently overburdened them. Sometimes historical events were treated merely as backgrounds for display of poetical skill, rhetorical display, or ethical maxims, and as a means of religious propaganda. Sometimes the ideal of history as an accurate delineation of past events was sacrificed in making it a source of entertainment.

But in spite of all these defects the ancient Hindus were not lacking in a correct appreciation of the true ideals and methods of history. This is definitely proved by the general principles laid down by Kalhaṇa and his great work *Rājataraṅgiṇī* to which detailed reference has been made above. Both in the theory and in its practical application Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* shows the high-water mark of historical knowledge reached by the ancient Hindus. Judged by any standard except the very modern one, the level of excellence attained by this work is very high, and though far inferior to three or four works of great genius, it can easily claim an honoured place among the historical works of ancient and medieval ages. In any case this one work is sufficient to prove that the ancient Hindus did not lack true historical sense, and there was no inherent defect in their mental outlook or intellectual development which rendered them incapable of producing good historical literature.

Absence of Historical Literature

Still the fact remains that except Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, which is merely a local history of Kāshmīr, there is no other historical text in the whole range of Sanskrit literature which makes even a near approach to it, or may be regarded as history in the proper sense of the term. This is a very strange phenomenon, for there is hardly any branch of human knowledge or any topic of human interest which is not adequately represented in Sanskrit literature. The absence of real historical literature is therefore naturally regarded as so very unusual that even many distinguished Indians cannot bring themselves to recognize the obvious fact, and seriously entertain the belief that there were many such historical texts, but that they have all perished. The great political leader, Surendranath Banerji, the father of Indian nationalism, gave an eloquent expression to this view in his usual oratorical manner, more than eighty years ago, and many have since followed suit.

It is true that many historical texts have perished beyond recovery. Apart from general consideration, this is clearly borne out by the fact that, with one exception, the large number of historical texts to which Kalhaṇa had access, as noted above, are no longer available.

But it should be remembered that the loss of historical chronicles in Kāshmīr is undoubtedly due, in a large measure, to the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* itself which superseded them and, to ordinary readers, rendered them superfluous. An analogous instance is furnished by Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*. It refers to many previous works on the subject which have entirely disappeared, presumably because nobody cared to read them after the masterly treatise of Kauṭilya was composed. It is, therefore, legitimate to hold that when a good literary work superseded previous texts on the subject, the latter were no longer studied and therefore fell into disuse and perished, in most cases, beyond recovery. Even apart from such reasons, individual works are liable to perish. This is proved by the chance discovery of a unique manuscript of *Rāma-carita* in Nepāl. But it is difficult to support the generally accepted view that literary texts of the type of *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, or something like it, treating the history of India as a whole, or parts of it, were actually composed in ancient India.

A little reflection would convince anybody of the error of this view. In the first place, it would be strange indeed that ravages of men and nature should have marked as special victims only the standard literary works on history, and that also in such a thorough manner that only a single representative work remains to tell the tale of this wholesale destruction. Individual volumes might have been lost, but it would be nothing short of a miracle if an entire branch of literature had perished beyond recovery. Secondly, there is a complete absence of reference to any such historical work in the vast Sanskrit literature still extant. No text of the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya was found till the beginning of the present century, but the existence of this book was known through quotations or references in later literature. There are many Sanskrit texts and commentaries which refer to old kings, but there is not the least reference to any historical work containing accounts of them. The ignorance of the careers of, and the absence of even any casual reference to, distinguished emperors, like Samudragupta, Candragupta and Skandagupta, Pulakeśī, Nāgabhaṭa and a host of other rulers and personages of eminence, in Sanskrit literature, may be regarded as almost decisive factors in reaching a conclusion on the point.

Thirdly, Kalhaṇa was a conscientious writer and must have taken all possible steps to acquaint himself with the history of the country, but although some of his heroes like Lalitāditya and Jayāpīḍa played a dominant part in Northern India, he does not seem to have known anything about its history. It is obvious that he had no access to any text dealing with the history of Northern India before his time.

Those who do not subscribe to the theory of wholesale destruction are faced with a singularly difficult problem. Why did the Hindu intellect, which was capable of writing the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, shrink from similar attempts to write the history of India as a whole, or, even if that idea were too ambitious, of the mighty empires that rose and fell in different parts of India? Various explanations have been offered, but they would hardly bear scrutiny. We have space here to refer to only a few of them, such as peculiarities of Indian psychology which denied any meaning or value to history, the absence of national sentiment, and the lack of that scientific attitude of mind which seeks to find natural causes for events of nature.

As regards the first, it will suffice to state that historical chronicles of an elementary or romantic type existed in large numbers, and it is difficult to conceive of a psychological state of mind in which men revel at the delineation of historical persons and events in a crude form, but shrink from giving it a developed literary form or a truly historical shape, which was not altogether foreign to them.

It has been urged that national feeling, roused by a foreign invasion, is a powerful aid to the writing of history; the example of Greece shows that it is evoked mostly in democratic states, and was therefore not noticeable in India to the same measure. We know really too little of Indian history to form a definite conclusion on this point, but the prolonged resistance of confederate democratic states of North Bihār against the growing power of Magadha, the stubborn and heroic opposition of democratic peoples in the Punjab and Afghanistan against Alexander, and the successful fight of the Mālavas, Yaudheyas and other republican states against the foreign conquerors of a later date, do not seem to have been taken into consideration in formulating such a theory.

As regards scientific attitude, it is necessary to point out that both Herodotus and Thucydides flourished in an age when the Greek military operations were guided by the position of the sun and moon, and the superstitious belief in the effect of an eclipse caused a disastrous defeat in the Peloponnesian War; when Anaxagoras was condemned to death by the General Assembly of Athens because he denied that the sun and moon were divine beings; when the study of astronomy was forbidden, and the Athenian democracy forced Socrates to put an end to his life by poison for 'not worshipping the gods whom the city worships'. If we remember that Āryabhaṭa, who discovered the true causes of eclipse, the rotatory motion of the earth round the sun, and many other brilliant scientific truths, flourished in an age which has been compared to the Periclean age of Athens for its intellectual and artistic achievement, but which produced no historical literature, we can hardly explain the absence of history in India by the absence of a scientific attitude of mind.

As a matter of fact the various theories put forward to explain the absence of history in India fail to take note of the fact that the problem that we have to solve is not the lack of historical writings, of which we have a fair number of specimens, but the absence of finished products like the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. There were historical writings about Kumārapāla and Vastupāla, about Rāmapāla, Vikramāditya VI, and Sindhurāja, but no history of the Caulukyas, the Pālas, the later Cālukyas and the Paramāras. None of the extant theories can sufficiently explain this phenomenon. The obvious fact remains that India lacked neither historical materials nor historical chronicles, and even the popular demand for, or interest in, historical knowledge was not altogether absent, but still no other first-rate writer like Kalhaṇa appeared in this branch of literature. This fact seems to be more an accident than the result of any definite cause or causes. The absence of such a writer diminished, or led to the lack of, popular interest in history, and these two factors acted and reacted on each other.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Kalhaṇa had no less than four successors who carried the history of Kāshmīr from the point where he left it to some years after its annexation by the Mughal Emperor Akbar. The spirit which was kindled by Kalhaṇa in Kāshmīr led to historical works which have stood the test of time, and have not disappeared. The rise of eminent writers like him in other parts of India might have led to similar results, and it is the absence of this factor that seems to be the major cause for the absence of real history in India.

2. THE PALI CHRONICLE OF CEYLON

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The *Mahāvaṃsa*, together with its continuation the *Cūḷavaṃsa*, forms the great Chronicle of the island of Laṅkā. It is a continuous record of over twenty centuries of history commencing with the legendary beginnings of the island in the fifth century B.C. and ending with the occupation of the Kandyan kingdom by the British in A.D. 1815. Composed in about a hundred chapters of Pāli verse, it is the most valuable source for the history of the island till the thirteenth century A.D. Apart from it much of the early history of Ceylon would be blank and certainly devoid of the details we now possess. But for all its historical value it is not history as we know it today. Myth and legend, poetry and religion, have combined to form a veil between the historian and his history. But these in themselves are important as revealing the concepts of history of an age that is past. Another important feature is that, unlike most medieval chronicles, the Ceylon Chronicle is not a dead relic of the past but continues more than ever to inspire a people, determine their attitudes and ideals, and to some extent fashion their conception of history.

The Origin and Development of the Historical Tradition

The Chronicle is not an isolated phenomenon. It arose out of an incipient tradition of history and as the best and most widely known representative of it continued to inspire and perpetuate the tradition. The nucleus of the tradition centred in the facts of the Buddha's life and the development of Buddhism. These are to be found today scattered in the canonical works and the Pāli works associated with them. The main interest in these was religious and sectarian. But a list of the contemporary kings of Magadha was included mainly to provide a chronological framework and background for the events within the Buddhist tradition and the succession of teachers. The record of regnal years and the lapse of time between certain important events served the same purpose. The record of Aśoka's patronage of Buddhism, the Third Council and the sending of the missions, especially the mission of Mahinda to Ceylon, rounded this body of tradition.

This group of historical traditions, some of it old and reliable, some late and doubtful, was brought to Ceylon with the introduction of Buddhism.

The same interest in the history of the *Sāsana* continued but apparently with added vigour. Traditions were handed down which dealt with Mahinda and his mission, the circumstances of the introduction of Buddhism, the foundation of the *Mahāvihāra* and the bringing of the Bodhi Tree and the relics. Here, too, as in Magadha, the succession of teachers after Mahinda was remembered and information about kings must have been similarly included alongside. One obvious reason was that it provided a convenient chronological framework for historical data. But the patronage they extended to the *Saṅgha* and the record of meritorious deeds were undoubtedly further reasons. A record of regnal years however does not seem to have been maintained till the reign of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi (161–137 B.C.).

These were all oral traditions and in the process of transmission details came to be elaborated, new features added and accuracy glossed over. Some of it was set in verse in time for easier transmission. The first knowledge we have of a collection of traditions of this type is from references to the *Siṃhala-aṭṭhakathā*—the commentaries on the Buddhist canon in Sinhalese. This body of commentary contained an historical introduction generally referred to as the *Siṃhala-aṭṭhakathā-mahāvaṃsa* which incorporated, in some order and sequence, these historical traditions of Buddhism. It probably came down to the death of Mahinda. There is reason to believe that important *vihāras* had their own recensions of this commentary with the introduction emphasizing naturally the traditions connected with them.

It is important to notice that this collection of traditions and legends was an introduction to the commentary and as such it seems to have had as its primary purpose the edification of the *Saṅgha*. It was not to begin with a history of the island or conceived as such. An example of this stereotyped pattern of historical introduction may be seen in the *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentary to the *vinaya* composed by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century A.D. which undoubtedly draws material and inspiration from this tradition. It set a framework and a pattern for a type of historical writing dealing with the history of the *Sāsana*, the *thūpas*, and relics.

Geiger makes the observation that 'the old framework (had) burst out of the historical introduction of the *aṭṭhakathā*, the "*Mahāvaṃsa* of the Ancients", the extensive monastery chronicle of the *Mahāvihāra*, developed'. The significance of the transformation and the chief characteristic of the change is the emphasis now given to the history of the island, alongside the existing history of Buddhism. It meant the incorporation of, or maybe creation of, the traditions of the visits of the Buddha to the island and its history before the introduction of Buddhism. They also seem to have kept some record of the kings after Devanampiya Tissa (247 B.C.) shortly after whose reign Mahinda had died, and continued it to the reign of Mahāsena (A.D. 274–302) whose destruction and consequent disorganization of the *Mahāvihāra* put an end to the continuity of *Mahāvihāra* records. In the process they gathered together current myths and legends of the past, popular accounts of the heroic deeds of kings and other interesting anecdotes. They also had with them records of religious benefactions, the construction of *vihāras* and *dāgobas* and probably of tanks as well. Thus it became a somewhat amorphous and growing body of myth and legend, history and religious panegyric.

The *Dīpavaṃsa*, composed in the fifth century A.D., is the earliest extant attempt to write a history of the island from the *Sīṃhala-aṭṭhakathā-mahāvaṃsa*. The title *Dīpavaṃsa*, which came to be associated with it, is significant, for it literally means the history of the island. We are not however certain yet on what particular recension it was based. It has been described as a work that 'can hardly be called a production of artistic merit', as 'a stringing together of fragments' and as displaying 'a clumsiness and an incorrectness of language and metre'. Its value is that it stands quite close to its source and therefore not only gives us a glimpse of the character of that source but hands over the traditions largely as it found them.

In the sixth century A.D. a monk of the *Mahāvihāra* fraternity named Mahānāma wrote the *Mahāvaṃsa*, basing it on the *Sīṃhala-aṭṭhakathā-mahāvaṃsa* of the *Mahāvihāra*, completing it in thirty-seven chapters and bringing it to the end of the reign of Mahāsena. It is in the same tradition as the *Dīpavaṃsa* and even more specifically a history of the island. Its author was, however, essentially a poet who, using the literary conventions of his time, wrote in quite good Pāli verse. In the selection of his material and the arrangement of his subjects he has displayed a sense of balance in keeping with his purpose. In the process, however, though he has introduced more material in a more readable style, he has, unlike the author of the *Dīpavaṃsa* who naïvely copied his source, somewhat reduced its historical value.

The continuation of the Chronicle beyond this reign was without doubt due to the tradition set by the *Mahāvaṃsa*, especially the last five chapters of it. We can assume that several hands had from time to time compiled chronicles for this period drawing material from royal and *vihāra* records, histories of relics and shrines, legend, folklore, and personal experience of the events described. Unfortunately none of these has survived. In the twelfth century A.D. soon after the death of Parākramabāhu I (A.D. 1153–86) a monk named Dhammakitti made use of such chronicles and records as existed and continued the Chronicle to the end of that reign, devoting eighteen of the forty chapters to the life of Parākramabāhu I. After the reign of Parākramabāhu IV of Kurunägala (A.D. 1325) an unknown monk wrote the second part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* and taking the first part for a model devoted five of his eleven chapters to the life of Parākramabāhu II (A.D. 1236–71) and four of the rest to his father and son Vijayabāhu III and IV. It is recorded in the third part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* that Kīrtiśrī Rajasiṃha (A.D. 1746–80) had the Chronicle continued up to his time. This was done by a monk called Tibboṭuvāve Sumaṅgala Thera in eight chapters, the last two of which constitute more than half the work and are a panegyric on and a summary of the life of that king. Chapter 101 is a supplement by Hikkaduve Sirisumaṅgala Thera which brings down the history to A.D. 1815, when the British occupied the Kandyan kingdom.

The traditional history writing was not confined to the great Chronicle. One branch of it specialized in religious subjects and works such as the *Thūpavaṃsa*, *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, *Dāṭhāvaṃsa* and the *Nikāya Saṅgrahā* were the result. The other, more strictly carrying on the tradition of the Chronicle, produced the *Rājaratnākaraya* and the *Rājāvaliya*.

The Fundamental Presuppositions of the Chronicle

All the authors of the Chronicle were pious and devoted monks whose works naturally reflect their religious belief and philosophical outlook. They were besides children of their age and were conditioned by the ideas of their time. In the writing of history therefore they started with certain fundamental presuppositions and preconceptions. These conceptions remain fairly constant right through the period covered by the Chronicle. Besides these ideas, which were basic to their religious beliefs, there were others of a derivative or secondary character more closely associated with history and historiography. In these however there are considerable differences between the various authors of the Chronicle.

Ideas of time. The concept of time is basic to any conception of history. Therefore in considering the historical works of other ages and cultures it is essential that the underlying ideas of time should first be recognized. The idea of time that lies behind the Chronicle and the historical tradition it represents is derived from the traditions of early Buddhism, and this in turn can be traced to Brahmanism. The Brāhmans in endeavouring to delve into the mysteries of time and history had evolved a cosmic framework which divided time into *kalpas* and *yugas*. This involved a cyclic or repetitive conception of history. They added to this the concept of deterioration and considered this last age *kali yuga*, the worst. This cyclic conception of history is but a reflection of their background philosophy, which places the ultimate reality and the goal of life outside the succession of births and rebirths, or what would today be called the process of history. History itself was of little significance therefore except as a means to an end. Buddhism, though it rejected Brahmanism, borrowed from it both its basic philosophical pattern and features of its cosmogony. Thus the cyclic concept of history with its repetitive ages came into this tradition. But it did not develop the same disregard for history. The Buddha invested his work with a sense of mission and a historic purpose. His incessant labours seemed to add a note of urgency to the proclamation of the Dhamma and the cessation of human suffering. Thus Buddhism became a missionary and a propagating religion, and time and geography came to be a matter of consequence. But the old cyclic conception of history was not discarded and the new ideas were worked into the old pattern. Thus twenty-four Buddhas of previous ages were discovered and the Buddha Metteyya, the one who is to come, strangely enough gives an apocalyptic twist to a cyclic concept.

The idea of foreknowledge and the power of prophecy so widely employed in the elaboration of legends and myths and in the attribution of importance and significance to events and persons is partly based upon this belief in the cycles of ages and the repetition of the historic process. This seems also involved with the theory of *Karma*. The knowledge of the past and the future however derives from the belief in the six supernormal powers of Buddhas and Arhants. The occurrence of auspicious signs and symbols too, implies a preordination of events by cyclic or karmic force. The connection between these is never clear. In the narration of events, however, there is no conception of fatalism discernible.

But the most significant feature arising out of the conception of time is the development of the idea of destiny. It could be named for convenience here the concept of the *Dhammadīpa*. In essence it is the belief that the island of Ceylon was destined by the Buddha to be the repository of the true doctrine, where the *Saṅgha* and the *Sāsana* would be firmly established and shine in glory. Ultimately one might trace the inspiration for this belief to the historic urgency of Buddhism itself, but more immediately to the great success of the *Sāsana* in the island. It may be that the historical circumstances of post-Aśokan India, when Buddhism entered on a period of decline, were a further reason. The idea gained authority from the natural conclusion that the Buddha had foreseen all these developments and that he must have hallowed Ceylon by special visits to it and prepared her for her destiny. This concept is of great significance for both the history and the historiography of the island.

The earliest traditions with the lists of kings and regnal years, synchronisms of contemporaries and the lapse of time between great events such as the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, the Councils, Aśoka's consecration and the foundation of the *Mahāvihāra* and Abhayagiri *vihāras*, reveal a desire to construct a chronology of events. Even the attempt to provide artificial regnal years to the early kings of Ceylon to make the landing of Vijaya synchronize with the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha is significant for this reason. From the reign of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi, however, an accurate record of regnal years seems to have been maintained. This has been continued into the *Cūḷavaṃsa*. Even apart from its accuracy the almost unbroken history of the island must have provided these writers with some notion of the continuity of history within a chronological framework. In the twelfth century A.D., probably after the first part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* was written, the available chronological evidence was sifted to construct an era beginning with the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. On the whole the Chronicle is a considerable achievement in mastering a chronological sequence of historical experience.

Ideas of man and society. In dealing with the concept of man it is necessary to make the distinction between those ideas that arose from religious beliefs and those that were conditioned by the state of knowledge at that time. The authors' attempt to pass beyond the pale of their limited experience with inadequate knowledge gave rise to those features which today we dismiss as unhistorical and miraculous.

The line drawn between the human and the non-human was vague and tenuous. To them it was well within the realm of possibility that gods, men, and demons could meet within the historical plane and also that men and animals could consort with each other. Though they would have recognized the rarity or even impossibility of these things within their own experience, outside it, in the past, the possibility would never be questioned. In the matter of supernatural intervention by gods and spirits, the action usually proceeded not from a supra-historical plane but from within the process of history. One reason for this is that in their cosmogony they conceived of the heavens and the hells in spatial terms with the historic plane placed in the same category.

It was a widely held belief that the limitations of human nature and power could be overcome by spiritual attainment and the acquisition of merit. Much of the miraculous element that occurs in the Chronicle can be traced to this. The powers acquired include not only spiritual, such as the ability to see the past and future and read auspicious signs, but also physical, such as travelling through the air and even control over nature and the demons. The many miracles such as transmission through the air, earthquakes, and homage of gods and demons associated with the Buddha relics, the Bodhi Tree, and the *Mahāvihāra*, ultimately derive from the merit acquired by the Buddha. The ancient authors, however, did not see the need to accept these only after verification. On the contrary by a process of inductive reasoning they assumed that these events could or should have taken place, and on that basis elaborated their story. The miracles associated with heroes such as Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi and Parākramabāhu I were as much based on this concept as on literary convention.

The general concept of man in the Chronicle is based on Theravāda Buddhist philosophy, though in practice extraneous influences such as Mahāyanism and Hinduism modified it gradually. The main historical and social purpose of man was to perform works of merit so that he might be born to a better condition or attain to heaven or achieve *Nirvāṇa*. Merit was conceived not so much in terms of the ethical as in worship of relics and homage to and patronage of the *Saṅgha*. Though belief in *Karma* determined the authors' estimate of man's destiny it was not reduced to fatalism.

In the *Mahāvaṃsa* and also in the early chapters of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* there is hardly any conception of society, and the state was identified with the king, though 'government' and 'kingship' are mentioned. Therefore, the public deeds of the king were often regarded as personal acts of piety. Generally the authors maintained an aloofness from rival political factions and interests, and even from race. But in the sections which have a strong popular ring and in the *Cūḷavaṃsa* (generally in the first part) there appears vaguely the notion of the state and society as an organic whole. These ideas may be traced to Sanskrit works such as Manu and the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, both of which seem to have been known in Ceylon. Thus the duties and functions of the king are better defined, though as yet no strict demarcation is made between personal and public action.

Ideas of History and Historiography

The word history can be used in the context of this age only in a very general and limited sense. The chroniclers had an interest in the past events of a particular movement and a particular people, and they arranged them in a certain chronological sequence. To this extent they were writing history. Sometimes they had in addition a theme which may be seen woven into the facts they were relating, giving them a certain unity—the destined connection between the island and the *Sāsana*, the struggle of the people against a foreign enemy, and his final expulsion and the unification of the island. The whole Chronicle too represents a unique achievement, being a continuous account of the main events of the life of a people, covering a period of over two thousand years.

The content of history. The content given to history was determined partly by the purpose of the authors and partly by the sources utilized. Since the Chronicle is a work of many hands from numerous sources there is no general uniformity of content. The main or only interests are religious and political, and these two strands move in and out of the Chronicle. The nucleus of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, which was the Buddhist historical tradition till the death of Mahinda and the establishment of the *Mahāvihāra*, can be picked out chapter by chapter from the Chronicle. This includes the traditions of the *Mahāvihāra* pertaining to the reign of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi as well. After this till the end of part one of the *Cūḷavaṃsa*, the religious data are an appendage within a political chronicle. Sometimes the material is just factual and sometimes it is worked over to become a panegyric. No attempt is made to give a historical summary of the history of the *Saṅgha* or of the religious relics. In the last two parts of the *Cūlavaṃsa*, the religious panegyric based on royal piety and benefactions tends to crowd out almost completely the political, and one could almost reconstruct the history of religious foundations, festivals and benefactions from the data given.

The political content was, to begin with, of secondary interest and the facts of Indian history remain so within the Chronicle. But when the history of the island gained an added interest with the concept of the island's destiny as being one with that of the *Sāsana*, much of the pre-Buddhist history was created out of popular legends and myths amplified by motifs from the *Jātakas*. The reign of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi is a landmark for the political interest it seems to have generated. The four early chapters of his reign are almost a straight political narrative. The Chronicle proper begins from his reign and the main political content included the king and his genealogical succession, regnal years, sometimes the circumstances of accession, war and rebellion, and popular anecdotes about the king. The construction of tanks and public works are recorded as works of private charity. Details on these topics increase with time. Biographical details sometimes occur, especially when a reign is selected as the subject of a *kāvya*. The last two parts of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* show a diminishing interest in political affairs which at this time were becoming more complicated.

Historiographical traditions. The Chronicle is not based on a uniform historiographical tradition but draws inspiration from different models and has created traditions of its own, each distinguished by style and purpose. The absence of a clear understanding of history as a separate branch of writing was one of the main causes for the variety of historiographical traditions. The absence of a clear purpose of history and the close dependence on sources are others.

The traditional form of history in Indian literature was the *Itihāsa-purāṇa*. One of the main characteristics of this type of literature was the collection of legends, anecdotes and genealogies of kings and religious personages and the traditions of shrines. They were used for the purpose of glorification and edification. The pre-Buddhist history of Ceylon and the early Buddhist tradition bear some resemblance to this type of literature, these being loose collections of legends and myths with interesting stories stuck in indiscriminately. But the accounts of Mahinda and the *Mahāvihāra* show a development both in style and substance. This development was worked on still further and a style of religious glorification evolved. The continuation of this style may be seen in the religious histories coming later. This could be called a religious panegyric and may have been influenced by the style of the *kāvya*.

Next in time to evolve is the plain annalistic type of chronicle dealing with the kings reign by reign. In origin these accounts were probably just records and the patronage of religion sometimes gave an added reason for remembrance of the data. Records were kept of the deeds of kings in court, but references to these are later, though the practice may have begun earlier. The *Punnapotthakāni* were books in which the meritorious deeds of the kings were recorded. The lists of tanks constructed and *vihāras* built also have the character of factual records. These subjects form the main character of chronicle writing. But it was never uniform. There were included the Purāṇic type of anecdote or legend as well as sometimes short sections of religious panegyric. Further inspired by the *kāvya* interest of the twelfth century the author often seized a story and expanded it.

In the later chronicle section of *Cūḷavaṃsa I* the annalistic pattern sometimes gives way to a matter-of-fact narrative of political events and the events of one reign flow into the other. It is clear that these narratives were based on earlier chronicles with a pronounced interest in politics. This tradition of annalistic and narrative chronicle was in all probability of indigenous origin.

The great popularity of the Sanskrit *kāvya* tradition did not fail to influence historiography in Ceylon. In India historical themes, especially biography, had been treated in this way. The distinctive features of the *kāvya* are not to be found in the use of verse but in theme and style. The themes were drawn from court life, from love and war and the world of nature. The style was picturesque, descriptive and sentimental, and tended more and more to be conventionalized. Classical allusions, fantastic imagery, and an exaggerated idealism characterized its language. It is clear that the author of the *Mahāvaṃsa* in the birth, boyhood and war of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi and in a few other anecdotes consciously uses the *kāvya* style. The *Cūḷavaṃsa*, however, shows quite plainly the influence of *kāvya*, especially in the treatment of the life of Parākramabāhu I. The *praśasti* was another form of writing in the *kāvya* tradition, the object of which was glorification, usually of the king, by attributing to him in the language of allusion, analogy and comparison the highest qualities and ideals of the type. It appears first in the middle of the first part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa*, and thereafter is fairly common.

The last type of writing to be distinguished as a special category is really a development of the religious panegyric of the *Mahāvaṃsa* under the influence of the late degenerate *kāvya* style. It is to be clearly seen in *Cūḷavaṃsa II* and is extensively used by the author of the last part. The objects of glorification here are usually relics such as the Sacred Tooth, festivals, and religious benefactions.

The purpose of history. The main difference, however, between the historical ideas of this time and those of our own lies not so much in content or even in historiography but in the conception of historical truth. The chroniclers had no clear notion of historical accuracy and there is no mention of historical verification, although in some parts of the Chronicle they set down factual data, some of which are verifiable, which lead us to believe that other motives and interests did not completely cloud their historical sense. However, truth for them lay not so much in the correspondence between the event and the record but in the intention, which might be religious, aesthetic, or emotional.

The overriding motives of the literary forms adopted tended to take the writer away from the correspondence between the fact and the record. Legend and myth jostle with truth in the *Itihāsa-purāṇa* sections of the *Mahāvaṃsa*. Though it may be that the authors themselves were just collecting stories of the past to fill a gap in history, the stories, however, were the product of a fertile imagination working on a germ of truth to satisfy that insatiable interest which man always has in a good story. Folklore, however, can never approximate to history. In the later portions of the Chronicle legends of Purāṇic type were used as expanded adjectives to describe the justice of an Elāra, the piety and self-sacrifice of a Sirisaṃghabo or the medical skill of a Buddhadāsa. These were almost always popular in origin. To arouse 'the serene joy and emotion of the pious' the concluding phrase of each chapter of the Chronicle succinctly describes the purpose of the religious panegyric. It was to create in the mind of the listener or reader an attitude of piety and devotion to the relics and the *Saṅgha* and the *Sāsana* as a whole by clothing the facts and the events with an aura of hyperbole. Though it was conscious falsification the intention was laudable and good, though not historical.

The intention of the *kāvya* similarly veered from truth and accuracy. The motive was literary. It was to create in the mind of the reader a sense of pleasure born of a happy and inspiring theme expressed in beautiful language. The main interest was aesthetic and directed to the emotions rather than to the intellect. If the theme was historical it was quite permissible to change, modify and even add to and reconstruct the facts for literary effect. In the account of Parākramabāhu I and of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi too to some extent, the authors attribute to them the qualities, circumstances of birth and training of an ideal hero, and the author of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* draws on Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* and Manu to illustrate the prowess of his hero in statecraft, diplomacy and war.

The *praśasti* form with its fulsome praise could hardly be said to have any relation to the truth. It was sometimes the stylized estimate of a king by the chronicler, sometimes the raising of a hero to heroic proportions as in the third part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa*, the gratitude of a writer to his patron.

The closest approximation to historical truth is to be found in the Chronicle sections where the motive seems to be a matter-of-fact record of events and deeds. But it should be remembered that this was written by authors who were versed in the *kāvya* style and this interest intrudes itself into the Chronicle.

History had a further use for these monk authors. They could not desist from drawing moral lessons from history and using it for edification. This purpose is implicit in the religious panegyric. But it is rarely that in the body of the chapter any interruption is made in the story or the narrative to draw out the moral. On the few occasions on which it does happen the remarks are brief and to the point. But the didactic purpose of the work is summarized in a verse or two at the end of nearly every chapter. It is sometimes general and sometimes directed to the kings, but is always relevant to the chapter. Its main purpose is to demonstrate the impermanence of worldly wealth, pomp, and power, and the necessity to shun wickedness and pleasure which lead to death and hell, and to do works of merit which lead to heaven or *Nirvāṇa*. A moral purpose is also implicit in the judgement the authors sometimes pronounce on kings at the end of their reigns. Some are sent to hell, some to heaven, and some just 'fall into the jaws of death'. The criterion of judgement is meritorious works and the patronage of the *Saṅgha*.

Political lessons are hardly ever drawn from history nor does any political purpose underlie the writing of it. Though the political function of the king was dimly recognized as giving happiness to the people, maintaining law and order and giving protection, it is only when conditions get so disorganized that life becomes impossible that these ideals find specific mention, but even then there is no didactic purpose. When words of political importance are put in the mouths of certain kings the purpose is heroic and literary, not didactic. Similarly it can hardly be said that patriotism was a motive for writing. The objection to foreign rulers seems to be not so much that they had foreign blood, for members of the Pāṇḍya and Kaliṅga dynasties were acceptable in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but that they did not patronize the *Saṅgha* and sometimes even destroyed and plundered *vihāras* and shrines, even as some Sinhalese kings did. The expulsion of such rulers and foreign enemies by Sinhalese kings sometimes finds more expanded treatment but the main purpose does not appear to be patriotic. But there are in the Chronicle passages which vividly portray war and the destruction and disorganization that follow in its wake.

The overriding interest over most of the Chronicle, however, is the welfare of the *Sāsana* and the primacy of the *Saṅgha*. Kings are sometimes made to pay complete obeisance to the *Saṅgha*, acknowledging their secondary role. But the Chronicle is faithful to fact in that the abuses within the *Saṅgha* are mentioned as well as its several purifications by regulative acts of the king that were necessary from time to time.

Besides the fundamental assumptions and these other motives that lie behind the Chronicle, the author of the *Mahāvaṃsa* had a narrower interest. He dealt with a period when the *Mahāvihāra* representing the Theravāda sect was the main tradition of Buddhism in Ceylon. He himself, being a member of the Theravāda fraternity, adopted strictly the Theravāda point of view. The *Mahāvaṃsa* thus takes a strong line against all heresy and deviation from the strict Theravāda tradition. Kings and monks who indulged in it were condemned in strong language. The *Cūḷavaṃsa*, however, was written at a time when sectarianism was endemic and this prejudice disappears. In it all the main sects are mentioned as recipients of benefactions.

An Historiographical Analysis of the Chronicle

The movement towards historiography within Buddhism can ultimately be traced to the emphasis it gave to time and history, by the urgency of spreading the Dhamma and putting an end to suffering. The growth of sectarianism further added a polemical reason for handing down the traditions. Legends of the great teachers were added to these and in the *Sīṃhala-aṭṭhakathā-mahāvaṃsa* we have probably the earliest known corpus of traditions somewhat in the fashion of an *Itihāsa-purāṇa*.

An examination of the *Mahāvaṃsa* and more especially the *Dīpavaṃsa* shows that a part of this corpus was worked out later in greater detail and in course of time in a more developed style. This was the part which became the religious panegyric of the *Mahāvihāra*. The obvious reason for this is that the monks would naturally elaborate the records of their own particular *vihāra*. But one has to suppose that the style was a local development from within the Buddhist tradition. At what stage the influence of the *kāvya* tradition was felt on this style is a moot point. Besides, religious themes were never traditionally regarded as suitable for *kāvya* treatment.

The emergence of a more definite historiography from this amorphous body of tradition is without doubt due to the emergence of the concept of the *Dhammadīpa* which by wedding the history of Buddhism and its destiny to that of the island provided a theme, a purpose and a framework within which to include such of the data on the past history of the island as they had. It is likely that the war of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi with the Damiḷas and his religious patronage had in some way influenced the origin of this belief.

The pre-Buddhist history of Ceylon, which is completed in four chapters, was largely a collection of popular legends and myths about the origins of the island, and the monks added to the story from their own background literature especially the *Jātakas*. This eclectic feature lent itself naturally to the *Itihāsa-purāṇa* style. It had not even the value of being within a tradition as the early Buddhist historical traditions had been. Historically, therefore, this is the most unreliable portion of the Chronicle.

The new interest in the history of the island as such led to the keeping of records of the reigns of kings and their activities. Thus the annalistic chronicle emerged though it is clear from the difference in style that it was quite a novel experience and that the monks were doubtful about its treatment. The chapters after the reign of Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi are partly matter-of-fact record, part legendary, with a few passages of religious panegyric. But they did not make it an *Itihāsa-purāṇa* like the early part of the history nor a religious panegyric like the rest.

The ostensible and avowed purpose of the author of the *Mahāvaṃsa* as stated in the poem is literary—to remove the 'many repetitions' of the source, to expand what was 'too closely knit' and condense 'what was too long drawn out'. He was a poet writing a literary work. But he did not stray from his source so as to destroy the character of that work as history as conceived in the source. Further, the different historiographical strata of the original are not obscured. It is clear that the author had been influenced by the *kāvya* tradition. The four chapters dealing with Duṭṭha Gāmaṇi's life have certain features of it—in the descriptions of the birth and training of the hero, his war, especially the capture of Vijitanagara, and his single combat with Elāra. In dealing with those legends that had a theme which could be elaborated on *kāvya* lines one may trace again some slight influence.

Geiger began the tradition of calling the *Mahāvaṃsa* an 'epic'. It is not an epic in the accepted sense of the word and there is nothing to compare it with. It does not fall into the category of *kāvya* by the mere use of verse and *kāvya* features are few. It could hardly be described as an *Itihāsa-purāṇa* though it bears some resemblance to that type of writing in parts. It is not a chronicle, for only five chapters could be so categorized. The *Mahāvaṃsa* is a combination of all these elements and what holds it together is the *Dhammadīpa* theme. It has within it inspiration for all the main types of historiography that developed later in Ceylon.

One of the problems of the *Mahāvaṃsa* is why the author, writing in the sixth century A.D., did not bring down the history to his own day. The reason given, that the Mahāvihāra records terminated with its extinction by Mahāsena, implies that records were not kept there after. But a study of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* shows, however, that records of some sort were kept, though it may not have been in the *Mahāvihāra*, and that some attempts were made to write chronicles as well. We cannot be certain whether these were written by monks or by secular hands. Court records probably existed from an early date, though the first mention of such records is in the reign of Vijayabāhu I (A.D. 1055–1114). Some passages seem to be based on *vihāra* records for they give much detail about relics, the construction of *vihāras*, and festivals. It is possible that some parts of these chronicles, especially after the eighth century A.D., were contemporaneous. The early annalistic portions of the *Culavaṃsa I* show a distinct resemblance in form though not in style to the chronicle in the *Mahāvaṃsa*. The move to compile chronicles was probably in large measure due to the example of the chronicle included in the *Mahāvaṃsa*.

Very little work has been done on the sources of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* or the dependence of the authors on them. But one point that emerges clearly is that the *Cūḷavaṃsa I* falls neatly into two sections and these display quite a contrast in historiography. The first part is the Chronicle and the second part is the life of Parākramabāhu I in *kāvya* style and also that of Vijayabāhu I on somewhat similar lines.

The Chronicle puts together the sources, records, chronicles, data from religious panegyrics such as the *Kēsadhātuvaṃsa* and in the early part some legends and miracles—and continues the *Mahāvaṃsa* chronicle. The interest in *kāvya* asserts itself occasionally in a few elaborated themes, the occasional *praśasti*, and something of the *kāvya* language. The contrast in treatment between the two parts seems to indicate that in the first the author depended closely on the sources for the Chronicle. This is the best achievement of historical writing within the Chronicle.

In the second part the author gives full rein to the *kāvya* interest. The Vijayabāhu story is a minor *kāvya* on the expulsion of the Coḷas. But he was circumscribed, probably by distance in time and the paucity of records at his disposal. The Parākramabāhu story, however, he treats in proper *kāvya* style, both of language and of the approximation of the hero to the ideal according to convention. It is difficult, however, to trace here the influence of any particular model in the *Carita* literature of India. Needless to say, historical accuracy, though he was dealing with contemporary material, was sacrificed for literary requirements.

Two things, however, must be said in favour of the author. He has not indiscriminately imported into his work certain features of the *kāvya* such as descriptions of seasons and love episodes, which he might have justifiably done since he was writing literature. He does not deviate from the straight narration of the biography of Parākramabāhu, giving all aspects of his adult political life in due proportion. Secondly he has not strayed so far away from the truth, which he could have done, that the truth cannot be discerned. Except for the details of his birth and early upbringing, the few episodes which served to illustrate his prowess and were obviously fictitious, and those parts where the author describes war and statecraft in conventional terms, he seems always to hover round the truth, making excuses for his hero's misdemeanours and faults and exaggerating his achievements. The very accurate topographical reconstruction of all his campaigns, the plausible narrative of diplomacy between his relations that can be read between the lines, and the identification of the system of canals and tanks which Parākramabāhu constructed or restored, are an index to the extent of truth the author incorporated in the narrative. It is not fiction but doctored fact.

The author of the second part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* essayed to emulate Dhammakitti. But for once his hero Parākramabāhu II did not measure up to the heroic proportions of the first of that name, and moreover he himself was not as adept in the art of the *kāvya* as his predecessor. He deals extensively with his reign and that of his father and son—the rest he dismisses with a valuable chapter in chronicle style at the beginning and another at the end. The effort at the heroic peters out to a few brief raids against the Damiḷas and then the author takes up again the religious panegyric with the meritorious deeds of the heroes as the starting point. Relics, *vihāras*, festivals, pageants, and benefactions to these are piously described in a highly ornate style and the Sacred Tooth Relic takes pride of place.

The third part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* does not even pretend to be a *kāvya* in a heroic theme. More than two-thirds of the work deals with Kīrtiśrī Rājasiṃha and the subject, his meritorious works and religious activities, in the style of the highly ornate religious panegyric interspersed by *praśasti* in *kāvya* style. It is brazenly an eulogy on a patron. The other reigns are dealt with in similar style though less extensively. The account of Rājasiṃha II alone has some feeble heroic interest. There is even less information than the previous part on political activities and this at a time that was so eventful and rich in history.

3. THE PALI CANON AND ITS COMMENTARIES AS AN HISTORICAL RECORD

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Historical Writing in Ancient India

It used to be said that Ancient India produced little or no historical literature. It was even suggested that the ancient Indians lacked the 'historical sense' possessed by other peoples: that they were too religious to be interested in such worldly matters. We need not trouble ourselves overmuch with the analysis of such superficial misconceptions.

But the problem still remains: what sort of historical writing and what attitudes to history prevailed in Ancient India? A certain plausibility had been given to the view that no such writing or attitudes existed by the paucity of the material that has survived. The Chronicles of Ceylon were allowed to be a partial exception (explained as due to the nature of Buddhism) written for the sake of religion rather than for the sake of history.[1] Those of Kashmir were little better and much more recent, and could thus be explained as due to foreign influence. Everything else (*Purāṇas*, etc.) was dismissed as totally unhistorical in conception: mere myths and garbled genealogies.

It is worth pointing out, in passing, that Buddhism flourished in many parts of India down to about the year 1200. If it had an attitude to history and a tendency to inspire historical writing its influence would presumably not be limited to Ceylon and Kashmir. We shall examine some Buddhist writing and attitudes to history below, but there is in fact no reason to credit the Buddhists in particular with having been the 'fathers of history' in India. The problem is: so much having been lost (and secular literature suffered much more than religious literature)[2] to what extent can we infer the existence and nature of historical writing (not merely purāṇic tradition) in Ancient India? Is it correct to assume that

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[1] Those of Burma and Siam seem to have been overlooked in this connection. They are important as including royal histories (*rājavaṃśa*, etc.) as well as religious histories.

[2] Anyone doubting this should try to write the history of *Kāvya* literature from Aśvaghoṣa (an isolated group of works owing its survival to its religious content) onwards, collecting what information he can on the lost works from the anthologies, treatises on poetics, etc. The poets themselves were only too anxious to eclipse their predecessors, whereas religious books were most carefully conserved (even if reinterpreted). Historians are like poets, in this matter, and whatever they produce soon becomes outdated just as the work of poets soon becomes outmoded. Even the *Purāṇas* were constantly rewritten and brought more up to date.

'. . . the chronicle as a literary form flourished in Kashmīr while it did not exist elsewhere'? (see below, A. L. Basham, *The Kashmir Chronicle*, p. 57).

It would seem probable that at least as an intermediate stage between the contemporary archives and official genealogies of ancient dynasties and the final diagrammatic combinations of the *Purāṇas* there existed chronicles of various types. As in Cambodia and Java—where Indian precedents were probably followed—a new dynasty would have an impressive family tree concocted to establish its legitimacy, and might seek to discredit its predecessor and if possible to obliterate its memory. The *vaṃśa* or genealogy was a popular type of literature sometimes developed into an elaborate composition including much more than mere statements of succession and chronology. It might be worked up in a variety of ways, using legendary or historical material from a variety of viewpoints and for various purposes. The *Raghuvaṃśa* is, of course, legendary, but it illustrates much working up (here entirely fictitious). It has indeed been suggested that its unwritten or lost conclusion (would have) brought it into connection with the dynasty of the poet's patron. But in any case the *vaṃśas* of reigning kings were worked up by court poets either in the fictitious-heroic manner or in the more historical manner represented by Kalhaṇa. Few such compositions, especially of the former type, would survive a change of dynasty. An example is Atula's *Mūsikavaṃśa*, in which a reigning dynasty in South India in the eleventh century is made out to be descended from the sole surviving branch of the kṣatriya caste after their slaughter by Paraśurāma. The development from *dynastic* history to a continuous *national* history can hardly be looked for among the shifting kingdoms of ancient and medieval India. There existed only the pan-Indian Sanskritic culture or civilization with its background of myth and legend which finds expression in the *universal* ancient emperors of the *Purāṇas*. Under the special circumstances of Ceylon and Kashmir we see perhaps a precocious nationalism preceding the substitution of national languages for 'universal' languages. We have, that is, a continuous history covering several dynasties within a clearly demarcated territory. A historian like Kalhaṇa working elsewhere in India—somewhere in the Ganges region, for example—had either to attempt a universal history of India or to limit himself to the reigning dynasty and perhaps its immediate predecessors in the same territory (with possibly a fictitious noble and divine ancestry). The *Harṣacarita* may perhaps illustrate the terms of reference within which a historian of the latter type might work. (This is not to maintain that Bāṇa was a 'historian' in the sense that Kalhaṇa was.) Universal history seems to have been confined mostly to the *Purāṇas* and to the Indian Buddhist tradition as represented by Vasumitra and Bhavya and their anonymous predecessors whose writings attained the status of *Vinaya*, *Sūtra*, and *Sāstra* in the Canons of the various Schools of Buddhism.

Without pursuing the general problem of the nature of historical writing in Ancient India further let us now see what the Pali Canon, as a specimen of these Buddhist Canons, has to contribute towards its elucidation.

The Pali Canon

We find in the Pali Canon and in the traditions subsidiary to it samples of Indian literature from the period of the rise of the Magadhan Empire (*c.* 500–200 B.C.).[3] As remarked above, religious literature may survive long after contemporary secular literature has almost totally disappeared. Happily the contents of the *Tipiṭaka* are varied, so that we are in a favourable position for forming some idea of the literature of this period. The outlook of the Buddhists in this period was broad and optimistic and they were ready to turn everything to account in developing and popularizing their ideas and in presenting a comprehensive 'world view'. The ideas of history thus incorporated in their Canon will be considered below.

The original kernel of the Buddhist collections, on the other hand, appears to have been of a homogeneous character and limited to certain definite objects. The *T(r)ipiṭaka* according to the unanimous tradition of the Sthavira and the other early Schools consisted of (1) the *Sutta* (*Sūtra*): a record by Ānanda of numerous discourses on various occasions, (2) the *Vinaya*: a record by Upāli of the foundation of the Buddhist *Saṅgha* by the Buddha after his Enlightenment and of its gradual development (especially in regard to organization and discipline) under his supervision, (3) the *Mātikā* (*Mātṛkā*): an enumeration of the main divisions of the Buddhist system of training and possibly of the main categories of the Buddhist philosophy (supposed to have been drawn up either by the Buddha himself or by one of his disciples with his approval; after receiving certain additions and modifications this material was subsequently elaborated by some Schools into the books called collectively *Abhidhamma*).

The Pali *Vinaya* purports to be essentially a record in chronological order of the events following the Enlightenment: especially of the gradual working out of regulations for the harmonious life of the *Saṅgha*. Prefixed to the central narrative is the *Pāṭimokkha*, which consists of the rules for individual discipline of members of the *Saṅgha* apparently extracted from the central narrative and arranged as sūtra and commentary: the sūtra stating the rule and the commentary stating the circumstances in which it first came to be formulated (time, place, persons involved) and explaining the terms used and the application of the rule in varying circumstances. The rules are arranged in groups according to the types of disciplinary action required in case of infringement (beginning with those requiring expulsion from the *Saṅgha*), but within each group the sequence is probably chronological. Additional rules peculiar to the female branch of the *Saṅgha*, which was founded later, form a supplement. The central narrative ('*Khandhakas*': *Mahāvagga*, and *Cullavagga*) contains mostly the regulations relating to the organization of the *Saṅgha*, apparently established as particular difficulties cropped up. To a considerable extent they have been regrouped by related topics. Supplementary sections were added dealing with the foundation of the female branch of the *Saṅgha* and with the Councils of Rājagaha and Vesālī.

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[3] The author's conclusion is based on work not yet published. For the present paper details on the internal chronology of the Canon are not essential. The Pali is of course only one of several similar Buddhist Canons which grew up during this period. Extensive parts of some of the others have been preserved, mostly in translations, and form a useful check on the idiosyncrasies of the Pali Canon of the Sthaviravāda School.

The Pali *Sutta* shows no overall chronological framework, the arrangement being by length, topic and mnemonic convenience (to which we may add *kāvya*, *ākhyāna*, *vaṃsa*, etc.—the later accretions in various literary *genres*). The individual '*Suttantas*', however, mostly have their place of origin noted, and sometimes the time, and they generally give a detailed and circumstantial account of the events leading up to the main discourse or dialogue, just as the *Vinaya* narrates the events leading up to the promulgation of a rule or regulation (the exceptions are numbers of short discourses to the *bhikkus*, normally located as to place of origin only). The actual doctrine of the Buddha, then, is usually presented against a background of events which give point and force to it. Sometimes we find a sequence of events and dialogues or discourses. Very important is that leading up to the *Parinibbāna* (*Mahāparinabbāna Suttanta* and some other *Suttantas* connected with it), which in fact seems to belong with the *Vinaya* narrative of the Council of Rājagaha immediately following the *Parinibbāna*.

These records of the activity of the Buddha were regarded by the Schools which rehearsed them as authentic historical records of the events connected with the foundation of their Order (*Saṅgha*) and the promulgation of their doctrine. The records are circumstantial and realistic and purport to be eye-witness accounts of the events. It seems we must accept the conclusion that some such eye-witness reports, at least, formed the model for this apparently unique style of literature, although we know that later on forgeries in the same style were produced in order to give currency to new doctrines.

The bias of the repeaters sometimes intrudes itself, often very clumsily, in the form of improbable eulogies of the Buddha by converted opponents, generally according to set formulae. Likewise there are miraculous props for establishing the genuineness of the Buddha and his doctrine in the face of rival claims.

The Commentaries

After the narrative of the Vesālī Council (*c.* 380 B.C.) had been incorporated in the *Cullavagga*, the *Sthavira Khandhakas* came to be regarded as a closed and canonical text which ought not to be altered or added to. Possibly small emendations and insertions were made during the latter part of the fourth century B.C., and even in the third century, authorizing the practices of the School. Later still, in Ceylon, a synopsis or index to the *Vinaya* was given canonical status as the '*Parivāra*'. Substantial additions, mainly of *kāvya* literature, were made to the *Sutta* during the fourth and third centuries, and the *Abhidhamma* stereotyping the philosophy of the School was mainly elaborated during this period and in part even later. The *Kathāvatthu* of the *Abhidhamma* is associated with the 'Third Council' supposed to have taken place at Pāṭaliputta *c.* 250 B.C. Historical references are confined to its non-canonical Commentary, however, the text dealing only abstractly with the controversial points without itself specifying which Schools opposed the *Sthaviras*. The 'Third Council' and other events of the Mauryan period were not recorded in the Canon, which was claimed to be the original, authentic, pre-schism text (even the *Kathāvatthu* was stated to have been outlined already in the *Mātikā* in anticipation of the schisms). But the work of chronicling and interpreting events which seemed important to the *Sthaviras* went on. It was essential for the School to have its authorized version of the schisms and of its own history after the 'Second Council'. All this, together with masses of exegesis and legend which had grown up round the Canon, was incorporated in the *Atthakathā* or Commentary, which remained fluid and continued to be added to. The Commentaries we now have are versions (translated from the vernaculars into Pali) of this material prepared in Ceylon and in the Coḷa country in the fifth century A.D. by collating several old recensions from different countries. At the beginning of the ancient *Atthakathā* there appears to have been a long historical introduction: '*vaṃsa*', i.e. the history of the School with its succession of elders who handed on the authentic tradition. A version of this is found at the beginning of the present *Vinaya* Commentary. The continuous narrative concludes with an account of the establishment of the School in Ceylon and events there down to about the year 200 B.C. But there is also a list of the succession of monks who handed down the *Vinaya* 'until today' (*Vin A* I, pp. 62–63), and elsewhere in the Commentaries subsequent events are described. Dr. Adikaram has established that 'today' here refers to the first century A.D., the succession concluding with monks who lived in that century (*Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Migoda, 1946, p. 3, etc.). The fifth-century recension has numerous references to events of this time, but only two references to later events have been pointed out so far (not counting, of course, the prefaced statements of the fifth-century editors on how the new texts came to be written). In their desire to produce a concise and manageable text, these editors seem unfortunately to have made substantial cuts in the ancient text, and they were perhaps more ready to do this in the historical portions than in the doctrinal exegesis. The *Ṭīkā* on the *Mahāvaṃsa*, for example, gives a fuller account of the Mauryan Dynasty than do either the present Commentaries or the Ceylon Chronicles. Evidently it drew on the still extant ancient *Aṭṭhakathā* (see *M. Tīkā*, pp. 180 ff.).

It is possible that the original *Dīpavaṃsa* was a separate account of the history of the *Sthaviras* in Ceylon, and that this narrative was subsequently incorporated or used in both the *Aṭṭhakathā* (which quotes the '*Dīpavaṃsa*': *Vin A* I, pp. 74–75) and the present *Dīpavaṃsa*. Whatever its origins, the present *Dīpavaṃsa* is a composite work representing diverse periods of composition. Thus some of its verses scan according to the usages of the ancient Canonical language, others according to the mispronunciations which became current perhaps *c.* A.D. 100. In any case after the first century A.D. the historical record was continued in the separate *vaṃsas* and not in the Commentaries.

The *Sthaviras* in Ceylon thus look back on about twenty-five centuries of continuous historical writing. Similar records were kept in Northern India by various Buddhist Schools, but were there obliterated, apparently during the Turkish invasions. They were partly preserved in Tibet and China, and utilized in subsequent historical writings in those countries.

The 'Background' and 'Attitude' of the Early Buddhist Record Makers

(*a*) Traditions concerning the prehistory of mankind. These may be to some extent paralleled in the Brahmanical traditions of the Four *Yugas*. They doubtless derived from the memory of primitive tribal communal society (the 'Golden Age').

The basic idea here was that of moral regress corresponding to the progress of society to its present stage of civilization. At the earliest stage of society, when all its members were morally perfect, there had been no state or kingship, no sex or marriage, no property, no work, no caste, no war, no old age, or disease. The earth itself consisted of a delicious edible substance: at first no one touched it, but after a time it was tasted and found enjoyable, whereupon all took to eating it. Their bodies then became coarser. Meanwhile the edible substance disappeared but was replaced by edible fungi and eventually by edible plants. The distinctions of sex then developed in their coarsened bodies and sexual passion and intercourse began. Afterwards it was discovered that food (rice) could be stored. As soon as this was done there was a shortage of wild rice. The land was then divided into private holdings to ensure fair distribution, but as a result of this theft was invented. To maintain the moral order, a man was elected king (*Dīgha* III, pp. 85–93). Thus the institutions of civilization (including caste, the Vedic religion, and especially the practice of retiring from the world to escape its evils) are accounted for, and even some old customs such as throwing dust, etc., at brides (said to have been done originally in disgust when sexual intercourse was first practised, this meaning having since been forgotten by those who kept up the custom). Elsewhere the evolution of society is associated with a progressive shortening of human life (*Dīgha* III, pp. 68 ff.). The original life-span was 80,000 years: when poverty first became widespread, and as a result of it theft and murder, the span became shortened to 40,000. Afterwards lying, adultery and other immoral behaviour resulted in further reductions until the present span of 100 years was reached. The process will continue (even the word *kusala*, 'good' or 'moral', will no longer exist) until eventually it will be reversed as a result of the rediscovery of the advantages of mutual cooperation as an alternative to mutual destruction (*Dīgha* III, p. 73).

(*b*) Legends of ancient hero-kings, usually world-emperors (*cakkavattins*). Whatever their origin, these legends were no longer historical. The emperors were now ideals to be emulated, and the Buddhist monks valued the legends as examples which contemporary kings might be persuaded to follow. The first emperor was Mahāsammata, the man first elected to uphold justice (see above). He is identical with Manu (*Vv A*, p. 19). Others were Daḷhanemi, Reṇu, and Mandhātā, all found in Brahmanical or Jaina legend also. At *J* VI, p. 251 there is an interesting list of virtuous kings: Dhataraṭṭha, Vessāmitta, Aṭṭhaka, Yāmataggi, Usinnaro and Sivi.

(*c*) Traditions of more recent events, of historical kings such as Janaka of Videha and perhaps the ancient kings of Kāsī and even some of those listed at *J* VI, p. 251 (see above). The Upaniṣadic philosopher Uddālaka, probably a contemporary of king Janaka, is also remembered, and the fact that he taught at Takkasilā (as in the *Chāndogya Up*. See *J* IV, pp. 298–304). This 'history', however, is already fading into legend and being adapted for the purpose of edification in much the same way as the stories of the legendary emperors. Numerous kings about whom there are stories in the *Jātaka* and who belong to the ancient *Itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition are in the same position. A good example is Angati of Videha, to whom the virtuous kings (*J* VI, p. 251) are suggested as examples to be emulated.

(*d*) Records of contemporary events. Those concerning the activities of the Buddha—debating, teaching and organizing—and which form the original framework of the Canon, have been noted briefly above. They became a special category: they were not records of ordinary events but of momentous events of cosmic significance, a significance which was not very apparent at first, perhaps (to the immediate followers of the Buddha), but which in any case gained strongly at the expense of the accuracy of the records as the personality of the 'perfect' Buddha (or still more of a Buddha) became a cosmic symbol. The Sthaviras perhaps more than any other School preserved ancient records of the Buddha as an ordinary human being living amongst his fellows, subject to sickness and weariness, but they too worked in an accompaniment of supernatural manifestations.

On the other hand there are many descriptions of other events, political and social: the wars between Kosala and Magadha; the subjugation of the Vajjīs, including the intrigues of Ajātasattu's minister Vassakāra; the building of the city of Pāṭaliputta; the voyages of adventurers to Indochina and Indonesia; and so on. The kingdom of Magadha occupies the central position in these accounts firstly because the *Saṅgha* came to have its main centre at Rājagaha (and later at Pāṭaliputta)—although the Buddha had taught mostly at Sāvatthi—and secondly because that kingdom rapidly extended its power over the rest of Northern India. These two facts are doubtless closely connected. The *Saṅgha* had close relations with the king at all times (a custom maintained in Ceylon, for example), and records of the transactions between these two institutions were of great practical importance. The kings of Kosala, Vatsa and Avantī, who had similar dealings with the *Saṅgha*, are mentioned less often. When all these countries had been incorporated in the Magadhan Empire the emperor was able to intervene still more effectively in the life of the *Saṅgha*.

The monks looked for a regular pattern in contemporary events (as in past events): for the workings of *karma* and the evolutions of the world within the limits set by the laws of causality. They recorded selected events, but also interpreted them and adduced them as illustrations of their doctrine. This led gradually to falsification as the memory of the events grew dim. Any event gradually lost its particularity and became general and symbolic. Individuals like Aśoka faded into types just as the Buddha had done. Udena became the popular figure of the gallant king, contrasted with Pajjota the ferocious tyrant. Briefly stated, the tendency was to assimilate the events of the present and of the recent past to those of the distant and legendary past, and indeed to those of the distant future when the present deterioration of society would be reversed and the world would become peaceful and densely populated (with as many cities as Aśoka had built *thūpas*) in anticipation of the advent of Metteyya.

The attitude in the Commentaries is similar to that in the Canon, being a gradual development from it. The process of *shift* from history to legend, from the particular to the general, continues. We have already mentioned the examples of Udena and Pajjota, who are historical figures in the Canon but who became legendary figures in the Commentaries. For example the *Dhammapada* Commentary has a long section (vol. i, pp. 161–231) on Udena in which we see him already in the character in which he appears in the *Bṛhatakathā* (the legendary father of the fictitious *cakkavattin* Naravāhanadatta) and in Bhāsa's plays. Indeed Dhāmaha's criticisms of parts of the story of his capture by Pajjota by means of an artificial elephant, as incredible, might already be applied. Aśoka also, who is not mentioned in the Canon and appears first in the Commentaries—standing in the midst of the period of the great schisms with which the old '*vaṃsa*' was naturally much preoccupied—very rapidly became a legendary and general figure. In the Commentaries (e.g. *Vin A* I, pp. 41 ff.) we find the historical record of Aśoka with miraculous accretions appended to it. In the *Mahāvaṃsa* (and even in the much earlier *Aśokāvadāna* of another School) the shift is complete.

There is no clear line of demarcation between the Canonical traditions and the Commentarial extensions of them. The Commentaries grew up round the Canon from a very ancient period, although at least after about the time of the 'Third Council' they were kept quite distinct. They add a great deal to the legends of the Canon and perhaps try to systematize them and sometimes to bring them into line with traditions other than the Buddhist (e.g. the identification of Mahāsāmmata with Manu already mentioned). In the *Jātaka* Commentary (vol. ii, p. 311) we find besides the story of Mandhātā his ancestry leading back to Mahāsāmmata.

The Attitude to Contemporary Events

Let us now glance at the attitude of the early Buddhists to the great political events and problems of their time: the contemporary changes in society and the question of state power.

In the sixth to fifth century B.C. several monarchical states, notably Kosala and Magadha, were expanding at the expense of the independent tribes, tribal republics, or city states which surrounded them. This struggle was not new, although we do not at present have a clear picture of the earlier history of the monarchical states, which reaches back some centuries at least and perhaps goes back without interruption to Harappā (recent archaeological work at Hastināpura and various sites connected with it seems to have established a sequence leading back to Harappā and further work may be expected to give some idea of the society of that period). By the period of the early Buddhists, however, the struggle seems to have reached a decisive point.

Some of the tribes, especially in areas remote from the centres of civilization, were no doubt in a pre-civilized stage of development—and some remained so long afterwards. Others, such as the famous Licchavis and their Vajjian Confederates, who had cities in their territory, whilst retaining the institutions of tribal society and being ruled by republican assemblies, had evidently evolved some elements of state organization of their own. They had modified their ancient institutions: the 'kingship' (equivalent to the powers of a state) was invested in the tribal assembly. Moreover such republics seem often to have been those of a ruling tribe which had subjected others. The Vajjian Confederacy had apparently destroyed the old monarchy of Videha during the sixth century: thus the republics had actually been expanding at the expense of the monarchies and the kings of Magadha must have regarded the Vajjīs as a mortal threat. By the fifth century the monarchies had increased their strength, perfecting their highly centralized political, economic, and military organization. Kosala for example was assimilating the tribes or republics on its eastern borders and had attained a greater size than probably any earlier state in the Ganges valley. Magadha, though smaller at first, had probably greater economic resources and under Bimbisāra had attained a higher degree of centralization. The struggle between Magadha, the most powerful monarchy, and the Vajjīs, the most powerful republican confederacy, is therefore of decisive importance and the attitude to it of our record makers is of the greatest interest.

The Buddhist *Saṅgha*, which was itself becoming almost a non-territorial or extra-territorial state, maintained cordial relations with both sides. Nevertheless the Buddha (who was born in a free tribe) and his early followers undoubtedly sympathized strongly with the Confederacy, whilst deploring its tendency to depart from its ancient constitution. The *Saṅgha* was organized on the same old democratic, republican principles. A quotation from the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta* will illustrate the Buddhist attitude (*Dīgha* II, pp. 72 ff., condensed):

> At one time the Bhagavant was living at Rājagaha on the Gijjhakūṭa mountain. At that time the king Māgadha Ajātasattu Vedehiputta (note the connection with Videha) desired to attack the Vajjīs. He spoke thus: 'I shall smash these Vajjīs who are so very powerful and great. I shall annihilate the Vajjīs. I shall obliterate the Vajjīs. I shall bring about the irrevocable disaster of the Vajjīs.'
>
> The king then sends his brahman minister Vassakāra with exact instructions to pay his compliments to the Bhagavant, inform him of the intention to attack and listen very carefully to his predictions as to the success of the campaign. When Vassakāra speaks to the Bhagavant, Ānanda is standing behind the latter fanning him. The Bhagavant then addresses Ānanda: 'Have you heard, Ānanda, whether the Vajjīs hold their assembly frequently, whether they cultivate the assembly?' When Ānanda replies in the affirmative the Bhagavant comments: 'As long as the Vajjīs hold their assembly frequently, cultivate the assembly, they may be expected to prosper and not decay.' He then asks similarly about the following points (all are answered in the affirmative):
>
> —whether they assemble and part in unity (unanimity) and carry out the Confederacy's business in unity,
> —whether they adhere to their ancient constitution (or customs),
> —whether they honour their elders and listen to their advice,
> —whether they prevent the forcible abduction of women and girls of the clans,
> —whether they honour the *cetiyas* in their territory with offerings and rites as of old,

—whether they protect and support the arahants among them and those who may enter their territory.

—If these conditions are observed the Vajjīs will prosper. Moreover, the Bhagavant claims to have taught them these conditions for prosperity himself (the episode is narrated in the Aṅguttara, iv, 16, where he teaches the Licchavis, one of the confederate tribes).

Vassakāra concludes from this that Ajātasattu will not be able to defeat the Vajjīs except by intrigue and breaking up their alliance. He then hurriedly excuses himself and presumably reports back to Ajātasattu. We hear of Vassakāra next at Pāṭaligāma, where with another minister he is supervising the building of the great fortress there to *repel* the Vajjīs.

Meanwhile the Bhagavant has lectured his followers at great length concerning conditions for the prosperity of the *Saṅgha*, which are modelled on those for the prosperity of the Vajjīs, beginning with the same first four but going on to enumerate many others—mostly points of doctrine.

On arriving in Pāṭaligāma he is invited to a meal by the two ministers. He counsels them, if they are wise, to support ascetics and honour the devatās, who will then look after them. They honour him by naming one of the gates of the fortress after him: Gotamadvāra. Then he leaves and crosses the Ganges into the Vajjī territory, proceeding to the city of the Licchavis, Vesālī, where he stays in a grove presented to the *Saṅgha*. The Licchavis all go to see him, and he remarks to his followers that they look as splendid as the Tāvatiṃsa Gods. On this occasion he gives religious instruction to them. Afterwards he continues on his last journey to the North. We hear again of Ajātasattu and the Licchavis when both claim shares of the relics of the Bhagavant and build *cetiyas* for them at Rājagaha and Vesālī. Peace or stalemate lasted for a time, but we learn elsewhere that Vassakāra was eventually successful with his intrigues, the Vajjīs became divided amongst themselves, and Ajātasattu conquered them.

This theme of the attitude to Ajātasattu and the Vajjīs could be developed with quotations from several other texts, but perhaps the above will show the early Buddhist policy of maintaining good relations with all political powers and hence a considerable detachment and objectivity in reporting political events. The texts were certainly added to after the conquest of the Vajjīs, even if they were composed before, but the disappearance of the losing side has not led to flattery of the victors, although the Canon grew up almost entirely within the Empire thus founded. The main bias is of course the utilization of the events to illustrate points of doctrine (elsewhere the destruction of the Licchavis is adduced as an example of the impermanence of everything) and also to show the Bhagavant as commanding respect everywhere. Otherwise there might be said to be a bias in favour of whoever is being spoken of at the time, an attempt to put the best construction on everything, an eclectic view of political affairs.

Two Attitudes to Contemporary Events

It is perhaps natural that their belief in *karma*, that no deed fails to bring its appropriate recompense, should produce a detached view in the records of the Buddhists, but such detachment is not always found, and became very rare in texts written in Ceylon and Burma, where the *Saṅgha* was usually closely dependent on a single state and tending to become a 'national church'—consequently itself playing a leading part in the politics of the country. In India, which was normally divided into several states, the *Saṅgha* remained detached, as it was at its origin. Its relations with kings were carefully defined, so that all kings might tolerate it. It not only accepted the laws of any country as binding on all communities resident there, but allowed kings to interfere in its internal affairs also. In this way a democratically organized community compromised with autocratic monarchy to secure toleration, and from this compromise, given the conditions in Ceylon and Burma, for example, there developed a 'state church' with the king dominating it. The later records (beginning with the Commentaries) are thus particularly concerned to glorify great kings who used their privileged position in the interests of true doctrine and the Sthavira School.

In the Pali literature we therefore have to distinguish two strata of texts according to their attitude to kings: therefore two strata of attitudes in historical writing. In the first, kings are powerful but not all-powerful. In the second the king is ex-officio the highest authority not only in secular matters but also in the affairs of the *Saṅgha*.

Conclusion

The interpretation of history was considered to be of great importance during the period reviewed (*c.* 500 B.C.–100 A.D.). Records of transactions and decisions were of practical utility, the lessons of history were of moral and social value. Explanations of past events according to one's own view, the justification of the actions of one's predecessors and the vindication of the claims of one's School to have preserved authentic tradition, were a necessity. The Buddhists in various parts of India, and in neighbouring countries, compiled and preserved historical records for these purposes, but they built on pre-Buddhist traditions and we have no reason to suppose that their activities were not paralleled by those of other religious sects and by kings whose need for such histories was equally great. Even didactic poets and writers of *kāvyas* intended not merely to flatter patrons may have used historical themes on occasion, but such works were not preserved unless incorporated in the religious canons (or in the *Itihāsa-purāṇa* collections which were likewise considered to be part of the Vedic Canon).

Historical records were usually called *vaṃsas*, which indicates their origin as genealogies. During this period they were often much more than genealogies: in the case of religious schools they recorded the descent of the tradition (*āgama*) from its origins in ancient times, with all the attendant circumstances which threatened to interrupt it but were successfully overcome. There were, however, other categories related to historical composition, such as the *apadāna* or legend of the remote past, the *ākhyāna* or epic tradition of the more recent past, and the traditions of the Brahmans known as *itihāsa-purāṇa*. The tradition concerning the origins of society is called *aggañña*.

Vaṃsas, *apadānas*, etc. of various kinds existed in India during the period reviewed, in the Sthaviravāda Canon and, at least after *c.* 350 B.C., in the Commentaries which grew up in the School. They also existed in the traditions of other Schools of Buddhism. In India itself all this literature vanished with the great monasteries in which Buddhist learning had been accumulated. Sthavira literature was taken to Ceylon during and after the third century B.C. and much of it has been preserved there. Selections of the literature of other Schools were later taken to Central Asia, China, Tibet, Mongolia, and other countries and preserved mostly in translations. From these materials, vast in quantity, we have to supplement the history of Indian literature as known from the remnant preserved in India itself. This history will remain sketchy and unrepresentative, especially in the field of secular literature, because our sources are mostly religious in character (religious canons, temple libraries, etc.).

4. THE KASHMIR CHRONICLE

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NOTE: References given without keyword are to Sir M. A. Stein's edition of the text of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (*Kalhaṇa's Rājataranginī or the Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*, Bombay, 1892), and are to book and verse. The keyword *Stein* indicates his translation of the work (*Kalhaṇa's Rājataranginī, a chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, 2 vols., Westminster, 1900) and references thus marked are to volume and page.[1]

Kalhaṇa and the Rājataraṅgiṇī

Though every important Hindu court no doubt maintained archives and genealogies of its rulers, Kashmīr is the only region of India in which a tradition of historical writing is known to have existed in pre-Muslim times. The chronicles of Rājasthān, Nepal, and Assam are certainly comparatively recent in the form in which we have them, and if they had earlier prototypes these have vanished. No definite reason can be given to explain why the chronicle as a literary form flourished in Kashmīr while it did not exist elsewhere. It may be due in part to the fact that Kashmīr is a sharply demarcated region of India, whose people early developed distinctive characteristics which gave them a stronger sense of nationalism than was found in other parts of the sub-continent, as a result of which their poets felt the urge to commit the history of Kashmīr to writing. Another factor which may have encouraged the growth of historical writing in Kashmīr was the contact with other peoples possessing a stronger sense of history than had India. Thus the semi-legendary king Meghavāhana is said to have had a Tibetan guru named Stunpa (iii, 10); the great eighth-century king Lalitāditya was served by a minister, who is called a

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[1] See also: *Rája Taranginī or History of Cashmīr*. Commenced under the auspices of the General Committee of Public Instruction and transferred to the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1835. *Kings of Kashmīra*, English translation of the *Rājataranginī* by J. C. Dutt, 3 vols., Calcutta, 1879–98. *Râdjataranginî*, Text and French translation by A. Troyer, 3 vols., Paris, 1840–52. *Rājatarangini*, ed. Durgāprasāda, 3 vols., Bombay, 1892–6. *Rājatarangini, the Saga of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, translated by R. S. Pandit, Allahabad, 1935. H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1931–6, vol. i, pp. 107–84. A. Berriedale Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Oxford, 1928, pp. 158–74. U. N. Ghoshal, 'Dynastic Chronicles of Kashmir', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, xviii, 195–207, 302–41; xix, 27–49, 156–72; Calcutta, 1942–3. S. V. Sohoni, 'The Chavillakara Fragment in Kalhana's Rājatarangini', *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, 1950, pp. 71–75. Somnath Dhar, *Kalhana—Poet-Historian of Kashmir*, Transaction No. 23, Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore, 1956.

Tukhāra, or Central Asian (iv, 211), and whose name, Caṅkuṇa, appears to be a transliteration of a Chinese title (*Stein* i, 143, n. 211); and Islāmic influence was certainly felt in the eleventh century (vii, 1149) and probably before. The development of historiography in Kashmīr may have been due to non-Indian influence on her culture. A further factor in the growth of historiography in Kashmīr may have been the persistence of Buddhism in that region. All the evidence would show that Buddhism had a stronger sense of history than did Hinduism. But the question cannot be settled with anything approaching certainty. Probably all three of the factors we have discussed had some effect, together with other factors which are not known to us.

Though several chronicles existed the only one to have survived is Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, completed in A.D. 1148–9 (viii, 3403). Apparently this was so much better than any previous chronicle that the earlier works disappeared, and it soon became the standard history of Kashmīr, to be continued in less adequate form by a succession of poets down to the Mughal conquest. The work is unique as the only attempt at true history in the whole of surviving Sanskrit literature, for the numerous *praśastis* of the inscriptions, the biographical *kāvyas* such as the *Harṣacarita* and the *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, the legends of the epics, and the king-lists of the Purāṇas cannot be considered as history in anything like the modern sense, whatever their value as historical sources.

The author of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* was a brāhman, the son of a certain Caṇpaka, whom Stein has identified with practical certainty with a minister of King Harṣa, who was deposed and killed in A.D. 1101 (*Stein* i, 6–7). Caṇpaka was alive in A.D. 1135 (viii, 2364 f.), but he played no further part in state affairs, and we have no evidence that his son Kalhaṇa held office under any of the kings of the second Lohara Dynasty, which succeeded that of Harṣa. Many indications show that Kalhaṇa was not a young man at the time of writing. The scion of a family fallen from its high estate, he wrote after a century of oppression, civil war, and disorder. True, the reigning king Jayasiṃha had held the throne by compromise and cunning for over twenty years when the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* was completed, but his reign was by no means a happy one. These facts must be borne in mind in any study of the poem.

The text itself consists of eight books of unequal length, written in nearly 8,000 highly-polished verses, and it has been more than once edited and translated. The standard edition and translation are those of Sir Aurel Stein, and in discussing Kalhaṇa and his work we can add little to what Stein has said in the masterly introduction to his translation.

The text may be roughly divided into three sections—

i. Books I–III, in which Kalhaṇa appears to have based his statements almost entirely on tradition.

ii. Books IV–VI, covering the Kārkoṭa and Utpala Dynasties, in which he has evidently made use of the works of earlier chroniclers who were contemporaries or near-contemporaries of the events they described.

iii. Books VII–VIII, covering the two Lohara Dynasties, in which one of his most important sources appears to be personal knowledge and eye-witness accounts, the latter often perhaps received at second or third hand.

The style of the work is usually comparatively simple, although the poet often indulges in the flowery language and fanciful imagery of courtly Sanskrit verse. He can, on occasion, describe events very vividly, but his last two books are very turgid. Here it seems evident that Kalhaṇa was writing chiefly for his own day, since new characters occur in the lengthy tale of intrigue and revolt without proper introduction, and, though Kalhaṇa scrupulously records the dates of the accession of each king, in the second and third sections of his chronicle, he rarely mentions the dates of important events within each reign. It seems clear that his chronicle was written primarily for readers who already knew the main course of recent history.

Kalhaṇa and his Sources

In the introductory verses of his chronicle Kalhaṇa mentions his sources, and says something about his attitude to them. His chief sources were other chroniclers 'who composed each the history of those kings whose contemporaries they were' (i, 9). One of Kalhaṇa's purposes in writing his chronicle was 'to give a connected account of what had become fragmentary' (i, 10). He criticizes some of his sources, which are now lost to us; Suvrata, who made an abridgement of earlier chronicles, is condemned for bad exposition and misplaced learning (i, 12), while of Kṣemendra's chronicle Kalhaṇa says roundly that not a single part is free from mistakes (i, 13). Eleven earlier chronicles were used by Kalhaṇa, as well as the *Nīlamata Purāṇa* (i, 14), the local purāṇa which contains some historical traditions. He is proud of the fact that his chronicle gives a fuller list of Kashmīr kings than had existed before (i, 16), evidently compiled by collating uncritically the lists of the earlier sources.

But Kalhaṇa was not satisfied with a mere collation of the data of chronicles. He mentions the fact that he had also referred to inscriptions and deeds recording the consecration of temples and monasteries and the *praśastis* of earlier kings (i, 15). It is strange that so few historical inscriptions have been found in Kashmīr, for Kalhaṇa gives clear evidence that the Hindu kings of the region, like those of other parts of India, delighted in recording their glory and munificence on stone or copper. General references (e.g. iii, 103; iv, 617; vii, 926) show that Kalhaṇa was also interested in coins as records of the past.

He made full use of tradition, whether written or verbal, and the earlier books of his chronicle are evidently almost entirely based on such tradition. Even the earliest kings have pious donations attributed to them, and many of these ascriptions seem to depend on popular etymologies—thus we are told that the legendary King Lava founded the town of Lolora and the *agrahāra* of Levara (i, 86–87); such a statement is probably due to the fancied similarity of the names of the places concerned to that of the legendary king. In his handling of tradition Kalhaṇa is not wholly uncritical. For instance, he mentions three traditions of the death of King Lalitāditya (A.D. 769) (iv, 367–70) without stating which he thinks true, and adds the comment, 'When the great meet their end there arise . . . stories indicative of their uncommon grandeur' (iv, 371). Similarly he gives two traditions of the death of King Yaśaskara (A.D. 948) (vi, 90–112). But in general Kalhaṇa's attitude to tradition is one of credulity. He fears that some of the stories of King Meghavāhana, whom he holds up as a model to his contemporaries, will not be believed by ordinary folk, and he therefore records them with embarrassment, but, he goes on, 'those who follow the way of the *ṛsis* are not dominated by subservience to their hearers' notions' (iii, 94–95). Later he again mentions that some people doubt the wonderful tales of Meghavāhana, and declares that such scoffers in later times will also disbelieve in the fantastic indecencies of Harṣa, of whom eye-witnesses survive (vii, 1137–8). His credulity is such that, without comment, he tells us that King Raṇāditya ruled for 300 years (iii, 470); that Lalitāditya, who reigned until the middle of the eighth century, had only to command and a divine *Kapittha* fruit was brought to him from the garden of the god Indra (iv, 220 ff.); and that Meghavāhana conquered Ceylon by the grace of the god Varuṇa, who made the sea rigid so that the Kashmīrī troops could cross it on foot (iii, 71 ff.).

For the last two books of his poem Kalhaṇa's main sources were evidently his own memory and the accounts, often no doubt received at second or third hand, of eye-witnesses and contemporaries. He states specifically that he witnessed the treachery of Bhikṣācara's troops in A.D. 1121 (viii, 941). Certain events of the reigns of Kalaśa and Harṣa, two generations earlier, are said still to be remembered by men of great age (vii, 569, 1066). A long and private altercation between King Ananta and his wife Sūryamatī is described in detail, and here, as if to meet obvious criticism as to the authenticity of his account, Kalhaṇa indirectly mentions his source with the words 'only Thakkana son of Tanvaṅga was present' (vii, 422). Though he himself seems to have played no important part in the politics of Kashmīr he was evidently very well connected, and he must have learnt much about the history of the previous two generations from his father and his father's friends.

Kalhaṇa's Purposes

Kalhaṇa did not recognize the historian or chronicler as a separate class of learned man. He looked upon himself not as a historian but as a poet (*kavi*) and his work is primarily a poem (*kāvya*). Only the poet can bring back the past and display it before the eyes of men, for with his mind's eye he sees existences which he reveals to others by divine intuition (i, 4–5). The writing of history is thus, for Kalhaṇa, subject to the same inspiration as poetry, and Clio is one with Calliope. The great deeds of many of the earliest kings of Kashmīr are unknown because in their days the land produced no poets (i, 45–46). The Indian poet, however, was not by any means a mere purveyor of aesthetic thrills, but had often a serious didactic purpose. And in one place Kalhaṇa explicitly records his purposes in composing his chronicle—to establish the true places and times of kings against fluctuating and conflicting tradition; to please his readers, by displaying before them the numberless events of ancient days; and to give them food for thought on the impermanence of things, thereby encouraging the sentiment of resignation (*śānta-rasa*) which rules supreme in the work (i, 21–23). Kalhaṇa's first purpose shows that he had at least some conception of historical truth; but beyond reaching the truth he had two further purposes—to entertain and to teach moral lessons. From the tenor of the whole work it would seem that, for Kalhaṇa, the third purpose was the major one, and the first of less importance.

But Kalhaṇa had other motives, either explicitly or implicitly expressed. He evidently believed that history taught lessons more practical than mere resignation, for he declared that, by studying the history of earlier reigns, the wise might foresee the fortunes or misfortunes of future kings (i, 189). Moreover, he seems to have been inspired in part by a deep feeling of regional patriotism—he shows great love for the land which no invader could conquer, with its mild sun and lovely rivers, famed for its learning, lofty houses, saffron, cool water, and grapes, in fact the best place on earth (i, 39–43). For Kalhaṇa Kashmīr is not a small hill-state, with little political influence on the outside world, but a great and mighty land, whose kings in former days conquered the whole of India and even Ceylon (i, 297, 339; iii, 356; iv, 131 ff. etc.). The benevolent Aśoka and Kaniṣka, and the oppressive Mihirakula were, for Kalhaṇa, kings of Kashmīr (i, 101–7, 168–72, 289–324). While recognizing the weaknesses of the national character, he clearly had the glory of his native land in mind as he wrote, and seems to have hoped that his poem might encourage his compatriots to emulate their greater forefathers.

He had very definite views on good government, which are largely those of orthodox *rājanīti*. Throughout the book, either directly or by implication, he makes it clear that his ideal is the strong king, who rigidly controls his underlings but is benevolent towards his people and sympathetic to their wishes, and who chooses his counsellors wisely and listens to their advice. On many occasions Kalhaṇa expresses his disapproval of the *ḍāmaras*, the petty feudal chiefs who, since the death of Harṣa, had reduced Kashmīr to anarchy and misery. He is the sworn foe of the bureaucracy, which must not be allowed to grow too influential. 'The crab kills its father and the white ant destroys its mother, but the ungrateful *kāyastha*, when he becomes powerful, destroys everything.' (viii, 89.) He is quick to denounce oppression. In fact the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* is in part a work of political propaganda, written for the purpose of persuading the ruling classes of Kashmīr to put their house in order. Sometimes, indeed, Kalhaṇa seems to despair of his land and her people—the presuppositions which we discuss below might be calculated to encourage pessimism. The words put in the mouth of the doomed Harṣa, the king whom Kalhaṇa's father loyally served, read like a judgement on his own day—'This land, after having been a virtuous woman, has fallen like a prostitute into the arms of the insolent. Henceforth whoever knows how to succeed by mere intrigue will aspire to his kingdom, whose power has gone.' (vii, 1419–20.) But the pious, resigned scholar often gives way before the earnest student of politics, eager to see his country better governed and more prosperous.

Kalhaṇa recognizes the merits of historical impartiality. 'In general,' he says, 'that poet alone is worthy of praise whose word, like that of a judge, keeps free from love and hatred in relating the facts of the past.' (i, 7.) His judgement on the more recent kings seems fair. He recognizes that no character is wholly black or white. He makes no attempt at whitewashing Harṣa, his father's patron, though he recognizes that even this debauched and tyrannical king had good qualities; while Uccala, the father of the ruling king Jayasiṃha, though 'a moon among great kings', 'lost his self-control . . . and caused terror by sinful acts.' (viii, 162.) In a beautiful verse he decides that human nature is unpredictable—'As in heaven the little clouds change shape, and take on the form of elephants, leopards, monsters, serpents, horses and other beasts—so do the waves of feeling change in the hearts of mortals, from kindliness to harshness as the moments vary.' (vii, 792.)

In this context Kalhaṇa's treatment of the reign and character of the ruling king Jayasiṃha is significant. Stein perhaps exaggerates Kalhaṇa's impartiality towards Jayasiṃha (*Stein* i, 17), and his statement that Kalhaṇa was not interested in obtaining royal recognition is, in our view, not proven. Certainly Kalhaṇa praises some of the king's enemies for their courage (viii, 1770, 2157–60), but Jayasiṃha himself is said to have done the same (viii, 1782–4). When the good minister Sujji is assassinated at the king's instigation Kalhaṇa makes no attempt to condone the deed, but explains it away as being due to the king's having fallen under the evil influence of calumniators (viii, 2185), and states that the king himself regretted his action (viii, 2187). In one or two places Kalhaṇa admits that the king has his detractors, and defends him from them (e.g. viii, 2381 ff.). The king's apparent cruelties and errors are in part due to the inscrutability of his statecraft, which in its outcome is invariably beneficial (viii, 1554–5), in part to the temporary weakening of his mental powers through sickness (viii, 1604–10), and in part to his occasionally accepting the advice of sycophants (viii, 1611–16, 2185). Though Jayasiṃha is not praised in quite the conventional *praśasti* style, Kalhaṇa's references to him are far more enthusiastic than those to any other king of the period. The account of Jayasiṃha's reign ends with a passage in praise of his children and his chief queen which is almost fulsome in its adulation of their piety and benevolence (viii, 3371–95). It is clear from the chronicle that Jayasiṃha was a shrewd politician, probably astute enough not to accept the usual panegyrics at their face value. He might well have received with greater enthusiasm encomia which had an air of honesty about them. Kalhaṇa can hardly have expected that his poem, which was obviously written for publication, would not come to the ear of the king. Can it be that, among the many motives with which he composed it, was the hope that it would earn Jayasiṃha's favour, convince him that its author was a man of great learning, patriotism, fearlessness and honesty, and lead to the son's regaining the honoured place in the councils of the state which the father had lost owing to his support of a tyrant? But it must be remembered, in this connection, that the conventions of Sanskrit literature required a happy ending, and Kalhaṇa was first and foremost a poet. He could not, had he desired, have concluded his work with a description of tyranny and oppression, without infringing all the accepted contemporary canons of good taste.

Kalhaṇa's Outlook

Kalhaṇa was a pious brāhman and his attitude to history was, in great measure, that of orthodoxy. The world for him is very ancient, and the history of Kashmīr is traced back to the foundation of the land by the Prajāpati Kaśyapa, who raised it from the great lake which formerly covered it (i, 26–27). The earliest king mentioned by name is Gonanda I, whom Kalhaṇa believed to have come to the throne in the year 653 (elapsed) of the *Kaliyuga*, or 2448 B.C. (i, 51). Since then, through the evil effects of the *Kaliyuga*, there has been a great decline in the world, and even its size has much diminished (iv, 408). Nobody can now equal the great deeds of ancient days (iv, 407). Yet the earliest kings of the chronicle are not very spectacular figures, being chiefly noteworthy for their religious foundations. The most remarkable of the kings recorded in the first part of the *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, Meghavāhana and Raṇāditya, ruled, according to Kalhaṇa, comparatively late (A.D. 12–46, 123–423, *Stein* i, 136). No king of the remote past approached in length of reign the tricentenarian Raṇāditya. Kalhaṇa thus is not committed to a doctrine of absolutely regular and progressive degeneration. The advent of Jayasiṃha has brought back something of the glory of legendary days (viii, 1557). The world is to some extent capable of improvement, and, for all his emphasis on resignation, Kalhaṇa's picture of the situation is not wholly without hope.

Kalhaṇa's attitude to history is, as might be expected, largely conditioned by his belief in *Karma*, which he held in common with his contemporaries. Nowhere does he explicitly state that man is wholly incapable of moulding in some measure his own history, but superhuman forces or beings evidently have the biggest part in the destiny of man. Sometimes the force of *Karma* is described as shaping events. The great successes of Lalitāditya were due to his having made gifts to brāhmans in a previous life (iv, 232 f.). The evil desires of kings, which bring ruin on the state, may originate in former births (iii, 424). Oppressive kings perish, but those who repair what has been destroyed find fortune (i, 188). *Karma* provides the basic moral sanction, punishing the evildoer and rewarding the righteous, either in this life or another.

A second force shaping human affairs is *fate*. As in much early Indian literature the power of fate is frequently referred to. Sandhimati is put to death, yet, by the power of fate, is restored to life and gains the throne (ii, 77 ff.). Fate leads kings, even against their will (vii, 7). References to fate as the arbiter of human affairs seem to recur more and more frequently in the last part of the poem. 'It is the sport of fate that the strong are deceived by the weak, and that those who hold affairs in their hands are confused by those without power.' (vii, 959.) Fate is sometimes personified. Thus the last line of the poem (viii, 3406), excluding the summary list of the kings of Kashmīr with which it ends, reads according to Stein's translation—'Whose nature can remain unchanged on the road laid out by the power of fate?' (*Stein* ii, 268.) But the word *vidhātṛ*, here translated 'fate', is an agent noun, and may equally well imply a creator god. God, or the gods, often influence human affairs. Thus it is the Creator who controls the fate of armies (vii, 1372); Mihirakula, though inordinately oppressive, was not killed in a popular rising, but held the throne for seventy years, because he was protected by the gods (i, 324). From time to time, however, Kalhaṇa expresses the view that adverse fate can be overcome. Jayāpīḍa's self-reliance overcame his fate (iv, 413). The strong man is urged to trust in his own arm, for the earth falls to the lot of the strong (vii, 1288). Kalhaṇa's implicit message is that, whatever fate or the Creator may have in store, only a self-reliant and strong king can save Kashmīr.

The king, for Kalhaṇa, is not a divinity—his relationship to his subjects is rather that of a father than of a god (v, 350). Yet the king often seems to partake of the supernatural. Jayasiṃha, the king ruling at the time of the composition of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, has superhuman powers (viii, 1552). The murderers of Harṣa were impious; earthquakes and rain from a cloudless sky accompanied his death; and Kashmīr has suffered calamities as a result of the sin of regicide (vii, 1721–3).

The *Karma* of the king is interlinked with that of his subjects. Good kings arise through the merits of their people (i, 187; iv, 39). The poet prays that Jayasiṃha may outlive the *Kalpa* 'through his subjects' merits' (viii, 3405). The régime of Kalaśa changed for the better 'through a rise in his subjects' merits' (vii, 506). The tyrant Mihirakula ultimately died 'through the superior effect of his subjects' merits' (i, 325). The same fate met the wicked Unmattāvanti (v, 448). The mad king Harṣa, on the other hand, survived as long as he did on account of the wickedness of his subjects (vii, 1141). Oppressive kings inevitably suffer from the sufferings they inflict on their people (e.g. vii, 1582; viii, 1951). The king is, it would seem, a part of the people and land of Kashmīr, looked on as an organic whole. For not only is the king mystically linked with his subjects, but even with the animals and the earth and atmosphere of his realm. In the reign of Meghavāhana, who enforced non-violence, even beasts of prey, such as otters, lions and eagles, took to vegetarianism (iii, 81). King Nara assaulted a brāhman's wife, and hence a rain of thunderbolts fell on the land, and burnt up the king and his capital (i, 246–66). The three Turuṣka kings, Huṣka, Juṣka, and Kaniṣka, encouraged Buddhism, and the traditional Hindu rites were not observed; as a result every winter there occurred exceptionally deep falls of snow, in which many Buddhists perished, but brāhmans were preserved. On the other hand the good king Tuñjina, in a time of famine, undertook such efficient relief measures that not a single subject died. When his granaries were quite exhausted there fell from heaven a miraculous rain of dead pigeons, which preserved the people's lives (ii, 50 ff.). In fact the morality of the king and his subjects has a definite effect upon the order of nature, through the power of *Karma* by which all natural events are intimately linked with human conduct. In this respect, as in many others, Kalhaṇa shows himself to be a man of his time. Well versed in Hindu religious dogma, he applied it to the traditions and annals of his country, no doubt in this following the example of the earlier chroniclers whose works he used. Though the tradition of historical writing probably did not exist outside Kashmīr at this time, Kalhaṇa's attitude to history would, we believe, have been shared by most educated men in medieval Hindu India.

5. HISTORICAL IDEAS IN EARLY TAMIL LITERATURE

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Introduction

It is indisputable that professedly historical works are conspicuous by their absence in early India. Several writers, commencing with Albīrūnī, the discerning scholar who visited the country in the eleventh century A.D., have observed that Indians of the past, despite their high intellectual attainments, lacked the historic spirit. This feature is as much true of the Tamils as of the rest of the Indians.

However, the Śaṅgam classics, comprising the extant literary works of the early Tamils, contain extraordinarily abundant data of historical value. They throw a flood of light on the political, and still more on the social and religious conditions of the early Tamils. But the determination of the chronology of the Śaṅgam age on the one hand, and the sifting of the historical data from the vast mass of miscellaneous material on the other, is by no means easy. The origin of the Śaṅgam, the celebrated literary Academy, is itself enshrouded in mystery.

The Śaṅgam

The earliest account of the Śaṅgam appears in the Commentary on the *Iṛaiyanār Ahapporul* (Grammar of Tamil Poetry)[1] which is not assignable to a date earlier than the eighth century A.D. Moreover it is coloured by the belief in the supernatural agency. It speaks of three successive Śaṅgams, which lasted altogether for 9,990 years and had in the aggregate 8,598 poets, who included certain gods as well! On the face of it this account is incredible.

Nevertheless, the entire tradition concerning the Academy does not seem to have been a fiction, for in the first place, traditions do not arise normally without any basis. Secondly, certain kings and poets figure in more than one classic of the Śaṅgam age. Apparently, fact and fiction seem to have become mixed up in the account recorded in the Commentary on the *Iṛaiyanār Ahapporul*. While it is quite probable that an academy of poets flourished under the patronage of the Pāṇḍyan kings, as mentioned in the *Vēḷvikkuḍi* grant,[2] many of the details concerning the Śaṅgam are clearly figments of the myth-maker's imagination.

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[1] See Dr. S. K. Aiyangar, *Beginnings of South Indian History* (1918), pp. 249–56, for an account of the legend; and P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *History of the Tamils* (1929), pp. 226–30, for a critical examination of the legend.

It is not possible to determine whether there existed three Śaṅgams or only one. The legend that the Pāṇḍyan kings changed their capitals twice before they settled in the present Madurai, is supported partly by the reference in the *Mahābhārata* and by the evidence of Pliny.[3] The fact of the three capitals was perhaps responsible for the legend of the three Śaṅgams. Tradition is, however, persistent that the two earlier Śaṅgams had produced numerous literary works, most of which have perished, and that the extant classics are mainly the products of the third Śaṅgam. It must be admitted that it is impossible to arrive at finality in respect of this question.

Chronological basis. Nor do the extant Śaṅgam works provide a firm chronological foothold for the history of the early Tamils. The determination of the age of the Śaṅgam has proved a vexed problem, for speculation on it has ranged from 500 B.C. to A.D. 500 not to speak of the extreme views on its upper and lower limits.[4] Doubtless, the Academy flourished prior to the seventh century A.D., because the Śaiva hymnodists, Sambandar and Appar, who were the contemporaries of Pallava Narasiṁhavarman I of the seventh century A.D., refer to the Śaṅgam.[5] Besides it is obvious that several centuries must have intervened before the rather archaic style of the Śaṅgam works attained the simple pattern of the devotional hymns of the seventh century A.D. Then again, it is unlikely that between the fourth and sixth centuries A.D., when Tamiḻakam was under the chaos caused by the Kaḷabhra irruption, the Śaṅgam would have flourished under the patronage of the Pāṇḍyan kings.

In fact, the generally accepted view which assigns the Śaṅgam to the early centuries of the Christian era seems to be based on valid grounds.[6] Besides the Gajabāhu-Śeṅguṭṭuvan synchronism, the so-called sheet-anchor of South Indian history, which ascribes the events embodied in the *Śilappadikāram* to the second century A.D., the remarkable coincidence of the Tamil literary references with the data furnished by the Greek geographers of the first and second centuries A.D., reinforced by the discovery of the Roman coins of that period in South India, lends support to this view. However, this conclusion has recently been challenged on the ground that the South Indian Brāhmī inscriptions of the third and second centuries B.C. reveal Tamil of a crude form and that the well-developed language of the Śaṅgam classics could not have appeared prior to A.D. 500.[7] But this challenge is based on a doubtful hypothesis. The language of these inscriptions represents a hybrid of Prākṛit and Tamil and not the real Tamil of the age.[8]

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[2] Madras Epigraphist's *Report for 1908*, pp. 62 ff. That there flourished a Śaṅgam is evident from the statement alleged to have been made by Neḍuñjeḻiyan, the victor of the battle of Talayālaṅgānam, that if he were to be defeated, the extent of his kingdom should not be sung by poets of world-wide renown, the chief of whom was Māṅgudi Marudan of great eminence (*Puṟam*, 72).

[3] *Mahābhārata*, Par. IX, 36. See also E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* (1928), p. 167.

[4] See V. R. R. Dikshitar, *Studies in Tamil Literature and History* (1936), pp. 20–21, and K. G. Sesha Aiyar, *Cēra kings of the Śaṅgam Period* (1937), pp. 97–122, for an enumeration of the different theories.

[5] *Tiruttēvar Tēvaram*, II, 10, and *Tirupputtur Tiruttagam*, II, 1, 2.

[6] K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India* (1955), pp. 112–13. While it is likely that the term Śaṅgam was derived from the Jains or Buddhists, P. T. S. Iyengar's suggestion that the Tamil Śaṅgam was established on the model of Vajra Nandi's Jain Śaṅgha of A.D. 470 at Madurai seems to be little more than a piece of guesswork (op. cit., p. 247).

The extant Śaṅgam literature comprises the eight anthologies called *Eṭṭuttogai* of short lyrics and the Ten Idylls known as *Pattuppāṭṭu.*[9] These poems are broadly classifiable into two groups, viz. those called '*Puṟam*' works, which deal with external matters like war and patronage of kings, and '*Aham*' works which concern themselves with love.[10] The anthologies and Idylls were no doubt compiled several centuries after the Śaṅgam age. Further, all the works in each of these categories were not composed at the same time either. Even verses in the *Puṟanānūṟu* belong to different periods of time within the Śaṅgam age. *Kalittogai* and *Paripāḍal* seem to be later than *Ahanānūṟu*, while *Tirumurugāṟṟuppaḍai* among the Ten Idylls was unquestionably a late composition, posterior to the third century A.D.

According to tradition the '18 Minor works' called '*Patineṇkīḻkaṇakku*', as well as the two great epics, *Maṇimēkhalai* and *Śilappadikāram*, are classed among the Śaṅgam classics. But the language as well as the ideas contained in most of them indicate a later date for them. However, all the '18 didactic poems', as they are described, do not belong to the same time, though they were grouped together because of the *veṇbā* metre in which all these poems were composed. Tradition which assigns the celebrated *Kuṟaḷ* to the Śaṅgam age might well be true to fact.[11] That *Kuṟaḷ* speaks of love marriages typical of the Śaṅgam age as contrasted with those of the *Śilappadikāram* epoch is a pointer in this direction. *Kuṛaḷ* (v. 475) mentions the example of the cart loaded with the feathers of peacocks; this is suggestive of the cart-loads of feathers sent abroad during the first and second centuries A.D. Again, *Kaḷavaḻi*, another of the 18 Minor works, was not far removed from the date of one verse in *Puṛanānūṛu* (v. 74). But *Tirukaḍugam* and *Śirupañcamūlam* are the latest in the series and were composed in the ninth century A.D. The references to *Peru Muttaraiyar* in *Nālaḍiyār* indicate contemporaneity of the work with these chieftains of the ninth century.

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[7] Dr. N. P. Chakravarti: Presidential address to the seventeenth session of the Indian History Congress, December 1954.

[8] K. K. Pillay, 'The South Indian Brāhmī Inscriptions and the Śaṅgam Age', *Tamil Culture*, April 1956.

[9] See V. R. R. Dikshitar, op. cit., pp. 24–45, for a brief account of the extant works of the Śaṅgam literature.

[10] Among the *Eṭṭuttogai* anthologies, *Puṟanānūṟu*, and *Padiṟṟuppattu* deal with Puṟam, and *Naṟṟiṇai*, *Kuṟundogai*, *Aiṅguṟunuṟu*, *Kalittogai* and *Ahanānūṟu* with Aham, while *Paripāḍal* partakes of the characteristics of both. Among the Ten Idylls, *Poruṇarāṟṟuppaḍai*, *Śiṟupāṇāṟṟuppadai*, *Perumpāṇāṟṟuppadai*, *Tirumurugāṟṟuppaḍai*, and *Malaipaḍukadām* are laudatory poems on patrons, and *Mullaippāṭṭu*, *Neḍunalvāḍai*, *Kuṟinjippāṭṭu* and *Paṭṭinappālai* are love poems, while *Maduraikkānci* is a benedictory poem.

[11] Contra, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, op. cit., p. 350. The reference to the author of *Kuṟaḷ* as the true poet (*Poyyil pulavan*) in *Maṇimēkhalai* (Canto 22, 11, 60–61) suggests an established reputation and an early date for him. Besides, the extant *Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai*, an anthology of panegyric verses sung by the Śaṅgam poets, proves the early appreciation of his splendid work.

The twin epics are anterior to many of the 18 didactic works, although the tradition which assigns them to the Śaṅgam age seems unacceptable. The themes of the epics belong in all probability to the second century A.D. The political background of the stories, and in particular the Gajabāhu-Śeṅguṭṭuvan synchronism, indicate this. The supernatural element in the epics apart, the principal events mentioned in *Śilappadikāram* could well have occurred in the second century A.D. The omission of the Pallavas in the political picture confirms it. Some time after popular imagination had spun stories out of the events, talented poets would have shaped them into epic form. Besides the larger proportion of Sanskrit words than in the early Tamil literature, the improved forms of the language, the appearance of the northern pattern of marriage ceremonies and the prominent role assigned to the festival of Indra in *Śilappadikāram*, all indicate a later date for the epics than for the Śaṅgam works.[12] It is interesting to find that a recent writer proceeding on astronomical data furnished by *Śilappadikāram* and its famous commentator, Aḍiyārkunallār, suggests A.D. 465 as the date for the composition of the epic.[13]

Maṇimēkhalai is totally Buddhist in its setting and though it is not indisputably established that Diṅnāga's *Nyāyapravēśa* had influenced the epic, the Buddhistic philosophy of the third and fourth centuries A.D. is clearly discernible in it.[14] *Maṇimēkhalai* reveals that Kāñci had become a centre of Buddhist learning. It may be recalled that Buddhist and Jain devotees had found their way into South India as early as the third and second centuries B.C. On the whole there is little justification for assigning the epics to a period later than the fifth century A.D.; in all probability they belong to the fourth or fifth century A.D.[15]

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[12] *Indra Vilā* (festival) is hardly mentioned in the Śaṅgam classics. A faint reference to the temple of Indra occurs in *Puṛam* (241). On the other hand, by the age of the epics the Indra festival had become so important that Puhār is stated to have been destroyed by Heavenly wrath caused by the failure to celebrate it regularly.

[13] M. Rajarao: 'The chronology of events in the Śilappadikāram', *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*—Culture and Heritage Number, 1956.

[14] See S. Kuppuswami Sastri, *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, Vol. I, 191–201. Contra Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting* (1928), pp. xxiv ff. Dr. Aiyangar thinks that the views of Diṅnāga must have been independently anticipated by the author of *Maṇimēkhalai* which might have been composed a century earlier than Diṅnāga, whose date, it may be added, is still a matter of speculation.

Historical Value of the Literature

Against the chronological background outlined above, the historical value of the different classes of early Tamil literature may be assessed. Among the Śaṅgam classics, *Puṟanānūṟu, Pattuppāṭṭu, and Padiṟṟuppattu* are the most important works for the reconstruction of the people's history. Though the *Aham* poems, which deal with love, occasionally advert to historical events and social customs, they are not as full and vivid in these respects as the *Puṟam* works in general.

The short lyrics of *Eṭṭuttogai* furnish a clue to the date, authorship of the poems, and the occasion for their composition, by means of a colophon appended to each poem. The Idylls also provide similar epilogues, *padigams* as they are called, but generally they are far too brief and little more than the authors' names are available from them. Among the *Eṭṭuttogai* collections themselves the historical value of the colophons is not uniformly of the same character. The *padigams* of the *Padiṟṟuppattu* appear to have been appended long after the poems were composed, for they mention important facts which are not found in the poems. For instance, Śeṅguṭṭuvan's northern expedition, the most important achievement ascribed to him by *Śilappadikāram*, is found mentioned in the *padigam* of the 5th Decad and not in the poem itself.

Far different is the case of the colophons in *Puṟanānūṟu*, since they seem to have appeared contemporaneously with the poems themselves.[16] Besides, there is no valid reason for disputing the claim registered in the colophons of *Puṟanānūṟu* that the poems were contemporary compositions dealing with particular situations to which the poets themselves were eye-witnesses. If this claim is true, the historical value of the work is great.

A remarkable feature about the *Puṟam* poems is that they deal with the situations in an objective and realistic manner. There is little of the conventional pattern either in their themes or in their treatment of the subject as we find in later poems. It is important to observe that the Śaṅgam poets were not petty-minded supplicants who praised their patrons indiscriminately. There are a number of courageous outbursts of poets expressing their contempt of those rulers who failed to treat them in the befitting manner.[17] Thus the poets maintained their self-respect, despite their poverty. Their poems were generally true to their convictions, though extravagant praises of generous patrons have occasionally found their way into the poems.

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[15] Paraṇar, a Śaṅgam poet, has sung on Śēran Śeṅguṭṭuvan who figures also in *Śilappadikāram*. Either Śeṅguṭṭuvan of Paraṇar was a different king, or more probably Paraṇar was a contemporary poet of Śeṅguṭṭuvan, while the author of the *Śilappadikāram* was of a later period.

[16] Madras Epigraphist's Report, 1907, p. 52, and K. A. N. Sastri, *Studies in Coḷa History and Administration*, pp. 14–18.

[17] As examples of poets who boldly remonstrated against ill-treatment may be mentioned *Perundalai Sāttanār* (*Puṟam* 151, 165, 205); *Peruncittiranār* (*Puṟam* 207 and 208), and *Auvaiyār* (*Puṟam* 206).

A principal drawback of the data provided by the Śaṅgam poems is that a continuous political history of the dynasties of the age cannot be reconstructed, for it is difficult to determine the genealogy or chronological relationship of the kings who figure in the classics. The Pāṇḍya, Cōḻa, and Cēra dynasties dominate Tamiḻakam in their respective divisions, while in between their territories there ruled several minor chieftains. But the achievements of prominent rulers and incidentally the character of monarchy are about the only data of political history which can be gathered from the poems.

6. HISTORICAL WRITING IN SINHALESE

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Vaṃsa Literature

Historical writing in the Sinhalese language is not of recent origin, as is the case with most of the South Asian languages under consideration,[1] and therefore the problems connected with Sinhalese historical literature are very numerous and manifold, since these extend over a very great length of time. They go back at least to the third century B.C. when the island became Buddhist and sacred shrines of this religion and monastic institutions were established in Ceylon. The earliest Sinhalese historical records are the histories of these places. Out of these grew the chronicles of the *Vaṃsa* literature which were translated into Pali and then retranslated into Sinhalese.[2]

It will thus be seen that even for a clear understanding of the Pali chronicles, one has to be well acquainted with Sinhalese historical literature. Not only are the original sources of the Pali chronicles Sinhalese records, but sometimes traces of the old Sinhalese tradition have survived independently of the Pali chronicles. At the same time there are parallel traditions preserved in Sinhalese historical works.

Inscriptions. With very rare exceptions, epigraphical records of Ceylon are in Sinhalese. It was seldom that the promulgators of inscriptions resorted to Pali or Sanskrit for recording historical events. The problems connected with the inscriptions of Ceylon and their historical value must be inquired into separately. Their nature and contents are very different from the Indian inscriptions that have been considered in this seminar. In this paper, however, epigraphical sources will be referred to only incidentally. Mention should, nevertheless, be made of the *katikāvatas*, or codes of discipline for Buddhist monks, which were promulgated and published from time to time. Some of the best examples of Buddhist church records are these *katikāvatas*.[3] For example, we may refer to the *katikāvata* of Parākramabāhu I (A.D. 1153–86) inscribed on the rock at the Galvihāra in Polonnaruva.[4] This was followed by other *katikāvatas* and some of the latest ones belong to the time of the kings of Kandy (18–19 cc.). A

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[1] See under, pp. 446–96.

[2] See C. E. Godakumbura, *Sinhalese Literature* (Colombo, 1955), ch. XII.

[3] *Katikāvatsangarā*, ed. D. B. Jayatilaka, 1922. For a short account of *katikāvatas* see *Sinhalese Literature*, pp. 20–22.

[4] *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, iii, 256–83, also in the *Katikāvatsangarā*.

katikāvata enumerates the rules agreed upon by a selected body of monks for the guidance of the brethren, and this is introduced by an historical account of the order from the time of the Buddha, its establishment in Ceylon, the various fortunes and vicissitudes it suffered in the island, and the immediate incidents that led to the proclamation of the relevant code of rules. A noteworthy feature of these historical introductions is their frankness and fairness. Even events which do not bring credit to the order of monks, stories which bring to light the faults of the brethren, are related, and this shows the reliability of the documents—at least for contemporary history. The purpose of the authors of the *katikāvatas* was only to record facts and not to eulogize their institutions.

History of the Order of Monks

There are also histories of the Buddhist order of monks and the Buddhist religion in Ceylon. *Pūjāvaliya*, an account of the offerings which the Buddha received in all his recorded births, including his last life on earth, ends with a brief account of the history of Ceylon and an account of how the religion was sustained by the kings of Ceylon (chapters 33–34). The main purpose of this section of the book is to narrate the services of the King Parākrambāhu II of Dambadeṇiya (A.D. 1236–71) to the religion of the Buddha.

Closely connected with the early *katikāvatas* and similar in content and structure, but more extensive in detail, is the *Sāsanāvatāraya* or the *Nikāya-sangrahaya* of Jayabāhu Devarakṣita Dharmakīrti, which was written to relate the history of the Buddhist church to the year A.D. 1385. The purpose of this book was to narrate the victories which the orthodox monks of the Mahāvihāra fraternity won over the monks of other schools, up to the time of King Bhuvanekabāhu V of Gampola (A.D. 1360–91), and then to give a detailed account of the religious work of the Dharmakīrtis of Gaḍalādeṇiya and their supporters, the kings of Gampola. Similarly, a later work, the *Sāsanāvatīrṇaya*, relates the work of Välivita Saraṇankara to reorganize and establish the Buddhist church after it had been in a state of neglect for a number of centuries. The name of its author is not recorded, but it is clear from the narrative that it was the work of a contemporary. Here too, as in the *katikāvatas*, the narrative is very fair and impartial. The writer merely chronicled events, with no bias on any side. He speaks of the pious work of Saraṇankara and his colleagues and pupils, and at the same time narrates a plot on the part of the monks to kill King Kīrti Śrī Rājasiṃha of Kandy (A.D. 1747–82), who at the time was a Śaivite, and to place on the throne a Siamese prince who had come to Ceylon in the guise of a Buddhist monk. In this portion of the narrative the writer displays a great deal of sympathy towards the king, though the latter was a non-Buddhist, and at the same time he speaks disparagingly about the conduct of the Buddhist monks and the Sinhalese chiefs who were concerned in the plot. The writer also tries to detect the causes of many contemporary events, and thus he displays the characteristics of a true historian.

There are numerous accounts of the history of the Buddhist order, especially those relating to the period of revival under Väliviṭa Saraṇaṅkara, and they are too many to describe in this paper. They all bear the characteristic of the Sinhalese historical writer, the interest in detail, even in the matter of dates, and the unbiased narrative of contemporary events.

Secular Historical Works

Just as records of sacred places were compiled, Sinhalese writers took an interest in preserving the stories and traditions of various villages, townships, districts and kingdoms. Thus grew up from about the fourteenth century onwards the *kaḍayim̱* and *vitti-pot*,[5] a class of geographical and historical descriptions of various places. In these are also included legends connected with the particular village, township, district, or kingdom. They delimit the boundaries of the place, describe its history, give the names of chiefs and kings connected with the place, and enumerate the estates and fields with an account of their area, sowing-extent, and produce; moreover they give the names of the important families, and the number of soldiers and workmen of different trades belonging to the place—in brief a complete economic and social account of the area under discussion. These books may have been compiled for the use of royal officers, or perhaps their origin may have been the simple desire to record such facts and events as were known to the compiler.

Large accounts of capital cities are known as *vistaraya*, and we have, for example, the *Yāpahu-vistaraya* and the *Kurunägalu-vistaraya*, two historical geographies of ancient capitals in the present North-Central Province. The purpose of these is the same as that of the *kaḍayim-vitti-pot*. There are also similar accounts of the whole island, and several different MSS. of this type, called the *Lankāvistaraya* have been preserved. These give the geography as well as the legendary history of the various kingdoms, provinces, and districts of Ceylon, sometimes with their boundaries and other descriptions. It is clear from these compositions that, to the Sinhalese historian, history was not possible without a clear geographical understanding of the country under review and that for him history and geography were not completely separate subjects, to be treated within different spheres.

Cosmology

From the description of the island, the Sinhalese writers proceeded to descriptions of the whole of the Dam̆badiva (Pali: Jambudvīpa). From this they went to the origin of the Universe and the world with its living beings. Thus we have a work called the *Bam̂baupata*, 'the Birth of the Brahmas',[6] which relates how the world began to evolve after its destruction by water at the end of the last time-cycle (kalpa).[7] (For the sources of the subject-matter of these texts see below.)

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[5] *Trisiṃhale kada im saha vitti*, ed. A. S. W. Mārambē; *Sinhalese Literature*, pp. 132–4.

Sinhalese historians took the history of their country to the beginning of time, just as some of the composers of Scandinavian sagas took their stories back to the biblical story of the creation. *Janavaṃsaya*, 'the History of Mankind',[8] relates the story of the origin of this kalpa, as the *Bam̂baupata* does, proceeds to give an account of the election of Mahāsammata as the first king of men, and continues the history of that dynasty. The discussion on the various castes is given here, not to foster the system, but to show that it is contrary to teachings of the Buddha, according to whose teachings one man can be superior to the other only by his actions irrespective of his caste. There are allusions to rulers of the Vanni, such as King Vat'himi (fourteenth century), and this material is common to the *Rājāvaliyas*.

The Rājāvaliyas

Some of the *Vitti-pot* were elaborated by means of additions from various other popular sources and made into more detailed histories, and out of these grew a class of chronicles called the *Rājāvaliyas*. Some of the MSS. of *Vitti-pot*, as a matter of fact, have been also alternatively called *Rājāvaliya*.[9] The area in which the *Rājāvaliyas* were originally composed appears to be the Vanni-hatpattuva in the present Kurunägala district. They date from about the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The best version of the *Rājāvaliya* for language, style and details of narrative, up to the fifteenth century, is the *Vannirājāvaliya*.[10] The larger versions of the *Vitti-pot* also belong to this district. A story which is found in almost all the MSS. of these texts is that of the Malala or Mala princes, who, according to the legend, came to this island from South India (Ändhra-deśa) to perform occult ceremonies in order to cure King Paṇḍuväsa, the successor of Vijaya. Parākramapura (or Nuvarakälē) in this district is itself associated with King Paṇḍuvāsudēva. The Malala princes, according to the *Vitti-pot*, settled down in Hatkōralē, and one purpose of writing down the *Vitti-pot* and their longer versions, the *Rājāvaliyas*, may have been to record the tradition concerning this community, which may have held an important position in society in the province at the time. There are also other provincial versions of the *Rājāvaliyas*, such as the *Hārispatturājāvaliya*, *Vijitavällērājāvaliya*, etc. The colophons of some of these texts show that they were written for some important families in the district and have come down in their generations.

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[6] For details see above in Dr. Warder's paper, Section 4.

[7] Wickremasinghe, *Catalogue of the Sinhalese manuscripts in the British Museum* (1900), No. 71.

[8] Wickremasinghe, *MSS. Cat.*, No. 76c.

[9] For example, MS. Or. 6606(150).

[10] A MS. from Kōtte, made available to the writer by a friend.

Mahārājāvaliya

The *Rājāvaliyas*, which were originally histories of provinces or districts, developed into histories of the whole island, and such compositions were known as the *Mahārājāvaliya*, which was again abridged into *Rājāvaliya*. When one refers to *Rājāvaliya* as a text, it should be clearly understood that there is no definite single work by that name, but there are various recensions and versions of the text. These groups and the similarities they bear to each other or the differences they contain when compared with each other have not yet been studied and settled. From a short study of the various printed versions and MSS. available, the writer has been able to divide the *Rājāvaliya* texts into the following groups:

(*a*) Printed text, ed. Vatuvattē Pēmānanda, 1926 (P).
(*b*) Printed text, ed. B. Guṇasekara, 1911 (G).
(*c*) 1–3. Three MSS. in the British Museum. Wickremasinghe *MSS. Cat.*, Nos. 70, 70a, 71 (W1, W2, W3).
Codices Indici Bibliothecae Regiae Havniensis . . . enumerati et descripti a N. L. Westergaard (1846) (C1, C2).
4–5. Two MSS. in the Royal Library at Copenhagen, Denmark.
6–7. Colombo Museum, Nos. 1952–3 (S1, S2).
(*d*) 8. MS. in the Library of S.O.A.S. (No. 41972) (BM1).
(*e*) 9. British Museum, Nevill Collection. 6606(79) only up to King Bhatiya I (BM2).
(*f*) 10. Or. 6606(78) (BM3).
(*g*) 11. Or. 6606(73) *Mahārājāvaliya*, continues the story up to 1872 (BM4).
(*h*) Text used by Upham for his translation (Upham).
(*i*) Colombo Museum, 1954 (S3).
(*j*) Colombo Museum, 1955 (S4).
(*k*) Colombo Museum, 1958 (S5).

I have thus examined seven distinct recensions of the *Rājāvaliya*. The five MSS. under (*c*) have many differences from each other, but I have tentatively classed them under one category. The MSS. under (*a*), (*e*), (*f*), (*g*), (*h*), and (*i*) are very different from each other as recensions, and not merely in verbal divergences, and each of them is different from the MSS. under (*e*).

In this paper reference will be generally made to the printed edition of Vatuvattē Pēmānanda (P). It is not proposed to discuss the various recensions in detail, but some indication of their contents will be made as occasion demands. What should be borne in mind is that one should not cite from a *Rājāvaliya*, as one does from another chronicle of Ceylon, say the *Mahāvaṃsa* or the *Rājaratnākaraya*,[11] without indicating which recension is referred to

The writing down of the *Rājāvaliya* works must have begun, as stated earlier, in about the fourteenth century. This does not, however, mean that the language of the texts as we now have them goes back to this period. There are two classes of Sinhalese texts. In the class which is composed in a classical style, such as the *Amāvatura*, *Pūjāvaliya*, or the *Kāryas*, the texts are preserved in their entirety. But there is also another popular class of literary work, where weight is given only to the tradition or the story contained in it, and not to the language in which the tradition is clothed. When these works come down from generation to generation or from hand to hand no importance is placed on copying down the text faithfully in the very words in which the work is found, but the story is rewritten. No doubt much of the original structure is preserved in the copy, but books are not copied in their entirety. The *Vitti-pot*, *Kaḍayim-pot*, and *Rājāvaliyas* belong to this class of work. This explains why there are appreciable differences in the language and even in the narrative of *Rājāvaliya* texts which otherwise belong to the same recension. So Hardy's and Turnour's suggestion[12] that the *Rājāvaliya* was composed at different periods by different hands is true for the subject-matter only and not for the language of the book. At the same time Wickremasinghe's conclusion[13] that the work was compiled by not more than two persons is true only in respect of its final redaction.

Analysis of a Rājāvaliya

We shall now consider the subject-matter of a typical version of the *Rājāvaliya*. For this purpose we may select the printed edition of Vatuvattē Pēmānanda. I have not been able to look for MSS. of this recension, but it agrees for the most part with (*b*) and group (*e*) except that it has an account of the origin of the cosmos at its beginning. Some of the *Rājāvaliya* MSS. are preceded by versions of the *Bam̆baupata*, 'the birth of the Brahmas' and other living beings, which was described above,[14] and it is quite likely that the final redaction of some of the recensions of the *Rājāvaliyas* incorporated this legend also in order to take back the history of the island to the origin of the Universe.

This story of the origin of the world is derived from the *Aggaññasutta* and the *Cakhavattisīhanādasutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* and their commentaries in the *Sumangalasvilāsinī*. This account appears to be a Buddhist counterpart to the Purāṇic accounts of the origin of the Universe. The story is purely Buddhistic, there is no Creator, the world and the living beings appear automatically according to the *Karma* of the beings who are destined to find an existence on earth or elsewhere.

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[11] See *Sinhalese Literature*, p. 127.

[12] R. S. Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, second edition (London, 1880), p. 539; G. Turnour, *Epitome of the History of Ceylon* (1836), Introduction, p. iv.

[13] *MSS. Cat.*, p. 76, column 2.

[14] British Museum MS. Wickremasinghe, *MSS. Cat.*, p. 78, Column 1, and No. 72.

The story of the origin of the world cycle is followed by a description of the Universe. This is in accordance with the Sinhalese historian's method which was to delimit and describe the region whose story he was relating, giving both *Kaḍayim* and *vitti*, 'the definition of the boundaries and the history'. In the *Maharājāvaliyas*, the writer naturally takes the whole Universe, coming gradually to Jambudvīpa and then to the island of Lankā. The description of the Universe is based on the accounts found in such *suttas* as the *Sattasuriyuggamanasutta* of the *Anguttara-nikāya* and its commentary in the *Manorathapūraṇī*. The source of the author of the *Rājāvaliya* was no doubt a *sanne* to the *sūtra*, which gave him further details.

A portion from the description of the Jambudvīpa may be cited: 'This world Jambudvīpa is a field of charity, and is more precious than the glory of the gods and the glory of Bam̐ba, which is more precious than either of the heavens. Bodhimaṇḍala stands in this country Madhyadeśa, in the middle of Jambudvīpa, on the eastern side of which stands a city or land called Kajangala Niyangama, which is six hundred Sinhalese miles distant from the said Bodhimaṇḍala. On the east of the said village stands a very large and high tree called the Salvṛkṣaya.' The description continues giving the distances between important places in 'Sinhalese miles'. The areas of different countries are given in 'Sinhalese (square) miles'. This is followed by a list of cities and townships. The description is typical of *Kaḍayim-pot*.[15]

The *Rājāvaliyas*, as their title indicates, are histories of the lineages of kings, and, as may be expected, their authors attempted first to speak of the origin of kingship in the world, and, as their chronicles dealt with the kings of Ceylon, they tried to trace the descent of these kings from the first king of human beings, Mahāsammata. The bare story may have been taken from the second chapter of the *Mahāvaṃsa*. The *Rājāvaliya* goes on to add further details. 'During the time of Mahāsammata the lion was chosen as their king by the beasts, the goose (*haṃsa*) was chosen king by the feathered tribes, and the fish called Ananda over all the fish.' Mahāsammata reigned for an *asanka* of years, and thereafter the life-span of people decreased. The writer proceeds to give the names of the descendants of Mahāsammata, coming down to the founding of the city of Kapilavatthu, the home of the Sākyans.

The Sākya clan originated from King Okkāka III. This story is narrated at length. Further their relationship with the powerful kings of Banaras is established. This was necessary as the chronicler wanted to give greater importance to the royal families of Ceylon. We shall read in the *Rājāvaliya* texts that the royal successor of Vijaya, namely King Paṇḍuvāsudéva, married Bhaddakaccānā, a Sākyan princess.

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[15] Upham, *The Mahávansi, the Rájá-ratnácari, and the Rájá-vali . . . translated from the Singhalese* (1833). ii, 144–5.

The story of Siṃhabāhu and the founding of the Sinhalese race is similar to the account in the *Mahāvaṃsa*, but there are further legends concerning Kuvenī, the Yakkha princess. The result of Vijaya's violating his vow to Kuvenī came upon Pandukābhaya, the second Sinhalese king of Ceylon, and, as stated earlier, the Mala king of South India had to be brought to the island through the intervention of Śakra (Indra) to ward off this evil. This interesting legend is given but briefly in the *Rājāvaliya*; but detailed versions are to be found in such works as the *Kuvēni-asna*, *Sihabā-asna*, and *Malērājakathāva.*[16]

We notice that in the *Rājāvaliyas* more emphasis is laid on legends which interested the people of the districts in which the works were compiled. The *Malērājakathāva* had been incorporated into the system of occult ceremonies regularly performed in the Sinhalese villages, and the people were interested in the story of Paṇḍuvāsudēva and the ceremonies performed for his cure. In the same way the cult of the goddess Pattinī had developed and become popular, with the various games connected with the cult, and hence we find the story of Gajabāhu's visit to the Cola court, and his honouring the insignia of the goddess, and bringing them to Ceylon, and the establishment of the ceremonies and processions in honour of Pattinī, recorded in our *Rājāvaliya* texts. This applied to some other stories and events also.

The various stories of the *Rājāvaliya* which are here found in a single text are also found as separate *vitti* or stories in *Vitti* books. It is likely that authors of *Rājāvaliya* works put these stories together, taking them from different sources.

The summary of the reigns of the kings of Ceylon up to the time of Parākramabāhu II is not entirely based on the *Mahāvaṃsa*. Wickremasinghe says[17] that it is based on the *Pūjāvaliya*. One sees that in compiling this list of kings a number of independent traditions have been followed. For example, a king by the name of Ganatissa is mentioned between Paṇḍukābhaya and Mutatissa (Mutasiva). A king of this name does not appear in the *Mahāvaṃsa* or the *Pūjāvaliya*, but the name is found in the *Mahābodhivaṃsa*. With regard to details in certain points, for example, in the stories of the Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and his warriors, the *Rājāvaliya* accounts appear to agree with the versions in the *Thūpavaṃsaya*. What we in fact notice is that the compilers of the *Rājāvaliyas* have not depended on one source for their information, but have taken their material from several different sources. In this respect a *Rājāvaliya* text resembles a modern Ph.D. thesis.

It has been noted that in the descriptions of the campaign of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī against Elāra the *Mahāvaṃsa*, the *Rājāvaliya*, the *Rasavahinī*, the *Saddharmālankāraya*, and the *Thūpavaṃsaya* all give different versions.

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[16] See *Sinhalese Literature* for descriptions of these texts.

[17] *MSS. Cat.*, p. 76.

In some of the *Rājāvaliya* texts, for example G, there is a gap of about 100 years in the history of Ceylon, after the reign of King Parākramabāhu II of Daṁbadeṇiya and King Vijayabāhu V, who according to these chronicles was taken to China by a stratagem. Then follows the story of the Alakeśvaras. It is possible, as indicated earlier, that this was the period in which the *Rājāvaliya* texts originated, and as new material was added to the texts the portion dealing with the fourteenth century, for which *vitti* books were plentiful, was left off.

From the fifteenth century the history of the Kōṭṭē, Sītāvaka, and Kandy kings and their dealings with the Portuguese and the Dutch (and in some versions, e.g. Or. 6606(73), the British also) are given with a certain amount of detail, and these accounts are taken from the records of contemporaries.

Ideas of Time and Chronology

Just as the Sinhalese historian was very conscious of place, that is geography, in his narrative of history, so was he conscious of time. From the time of the legendary kings, he mentions the lengths of the reigns of kings. He then places them in their chronological order. He gives dates, first in *kalpas*, then in the Buddhist and Śaka Eras, the systems of chronology accepted by writers on history. Rarely he uses the Christian era also. When narrating the landing of the Portuguese near Kōṭṭē, the date is given: 'in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1522'. This does not mean the writer of this portion of the history was a Christian; the writer was only translating the phrase 'Anno Domini' used in Christian records. Certain MSS., in fact, have added 'in the year of Our Lord, the noble Buddha'.

As in other chronicles of Ceylon in the *Rājāvaliya*, dating is begun by synchronizing the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha with the arrival of Vijaya. This no doubt is a borrowing from other sources. Their next synchronism is of Cōranāga (3 B.C.–A.D. 9) with a king called Milinda in India, in whose reign there was a great famine. Neither this synchronism nor the legends associated with Cōranāga are found in the *Mahāvaṃsa*. According to the *Pūjāvaliya* this famine occurred in Valagambā's reign. It is stated that the Śaka Era originated in India during Cōranāga's reign. According to the reckoning of the *Rājāvaliya*, the year 623 of the Buddhist Era synchronizes with the first year of the Śaka Era. During the time the *Rājāvaliyas* were compiled, the Śaka era was so extensively used by the Sinhalese astronomers and in Sinhalese calendars, that it was found necessary to explain the origin of this era.

Unlike the Pali chronicle a sharp distinction is here made between the *Mahāvaṃsa* kings and *Cūḷavaṃsa* kings (Upham, pp. 238–9). Here even

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the number of days from Vijaya to Mahasen is recorded, a detail not found in the *Mahāvaṃsa.*

The author of the *Rājāvaliya* is at times very precise in the matter of dates (p. 871). In giving the date of the death of Rājasimha I, it is said that the event took place in the Śaka era 1514, and further it is stated that it was a Thursday, the 7th day after the new moon, and that the asterism at the time was Hata.

Language

The *Rājāvaliya* is written in a popular language, without embellishments as in the Chronicles in Pali verse. No extraneous words are, therefore, introduced for the sake of embellishment, and thus the credibility of the work becomes greater. Names of kings are used in the form to which the Sinhalese people were accustomed. Thus we have Eḷu-forms such as Duṭugämuṇu and Valagambā; Pali forms like Cōranāga, Sirināga; and Sanskrit forms like Parākramabāhu. Thus we do not find unnatural Pali forms of proper nouns such as Sirivikkamarājasīha.

Ideas of History in the Sinhalese Historical Writings of the Nineteenth Century

It is not possible within the scope of this paper to discuss all the extended versions of the *Rājāvaliyas*, but here we shall give a brief account of one of them, a version called the *Mahārājavaliya*,[18] which was written by Polvattē Vidānē of Yaṭihalagala in Hārasiyapattuva (in the modern district of Kandy). The author says that he began the work in A.D. 1821 and completed it on the 15th of May A.D. 1872. In spite of this statement, some of the material contained in it appears to have been taken from the *Heladivrajaniya* and the *Simhalarājāvaliya*, which will be mentioned below. The composite nature of *Rājāvaliya* texts is clearly seen in this MS., since after the reign of Mayādunne of Sītāvaka (leaf 119) it has, *siddhir astu* 'thus ends the *Rājāvaliya*'.

The writer comments on the policy of the Dutch Government in their attempt to strengthen their position in their provinces by converting the subjects to Christianity. He says that a proclamation was made to the effect that 'no person who is not a Protestant Christian will receive any office under the Government nor will such a person get any share of crown land' (all unoccupied lands under the system of tenure were deemed to be crown land). When this was done, says the historian, even Brahmins, Buddhists and Viṣṇuites, all were baptized, but many practised their religions in secret. The Europeans, however, respected those who practised their religion openly. He goes on to say that the Dutch cared for nothing more than enriching themselves. Their only quest was cinnamon.

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[18] Or. 6606(73).

He adds, however, that occasionally there were good Dutch Governors, and names one of them.

The work ends in the régime of Governor Gregory. The last paragraph is a comment on the English régime. The writer says, 'the English want to establish themselves, but they have no thought about the prosperity of the people'. Then he goes on to speak of the difficulties the Sinhalese people had to endure in courts of law, the heavy fees for solicitors and advocates, the high taxes and rates. The religion of the Buddha and the sacred places of the Buddhists are neglected. But the writer finishes saying, 'although there are no Arahats the common monks have established holy seats all over the island'.

Heladivrajaniya

Heladivrajaniya or 'the order of the kings of the island of Lanka' by John Pereira is one of the best examples of texts prepared during the nineteenth century for the use of schools. Its author was a Catholic and Head Master of the School for Training of Teachers run by the Colonial Government. The author tries to rationalize the old legends, like those of Siṃhabāhu, Vijaya, and Kuvenī, but when he comes to any story connected with Buddhism, such as the visits of the Buddha, he straightway says that it is not to be trusted. At times the author, while introducing a story, says, 'It is so said in the *Mahāvaṃsa* or the *Rājāvaliya*'. Right through the work, it is noticeable that the author's attitude was one of distrust towards Buddhism.

Simhala-Rājāvaliya

The Christian Vernacular Education Society of Colombo plagiarized the name of *Rājāvaliya* and published a school text-book on Ceylon history under the title *Simhala-Rājāvaliya* or *Lankā-kathāva*, 'The Lineage of Sinhalese Kings' or 'The History of Ceylon'.[19] The fifth edition of this book, with 3,000 copies, was printed in 1888 at the Wesleyan Press, Colombo, and by this time a total of 17,000 copies had been issued. The English title of the book reads: 'The History of Ceylon, compiled from Knighton, Pridham, Turnour, Tennent, Ferguson's Handbook, etc.' This clearly shows that the author, who no doubt was a missionary, ignored the original sources altogether.

The book starts with the statement, 'The early history of Ceylon is completely doubtful' (p. 2), thus warning the student against paying much heed to the early stories of his country. The story of the preaching of Buddhism in Ceylon by Mahinda is followed by this sermon: 'Many think that the religion of their ancestors should not be abandoned. This is a wrong idea.

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[19] Fifth edition (1888).

If the religion of one's ancestors is correct one may abide in it; if it is false it should be discarded' (p. 9). (Perhaps the teacher had intended to add: 'you should give up Buddhism, because it is false, and take to Christianity, because it is correct'.)

In order to show the purpose the writer of this 'History of Ceylon' had in mind when he compiled the book, one may cite extensively from his epitome (pp. 92 ff.) which he opens with the wise words of Solomon: 'Do not think that the past is better than the present. You should intelligently ponder over this.' 'The same is true of Ceylon', says the missionary historian. He goes on to speak of the tyrannical rule of Sinhalese kings. (We, however, do not know on what authority.) 'In former times no one was permitted, without the sanction of the king, to build a storied house, to have large windows, to tile a roof or to apply whitewash. Only the king and the Buddhist monks (*mahanunnānsēlā*) were able to have chairs or other comfortable seats with arm rests. The other people sat on mats; they ate seated on the ground.'

On the economic state of the country, the historian says: 'There was only a little money in the country; there were only a few gold coins, and a few silver pieces bent like hooks. Trade was carried on by barter. They gave paddy and got salt and cloth in exchange. It was difficult to protect material possessions and people had to bury their coins. The villagers' diet was very poor. Even for a wedding feast, they very often had only salted meat or fish.'

The advantages of British rule are enumerated: 'Now we can build houses with large windows to get good air. Now many people have beds. It is more comfortable to sleep in beds than to sleep on mats spread on the ground. . . . Now even private individuals have bigger houses than the house of an Adigar during the time of Sinhalese kings.'

> 'The coffee plantations have brought to Ceylon thousands of cart-loads of money. Now most of the people are richer than they were in the former days. In the time of the Sinhalese kings, aliens could not enter into their territory. The boundaries of the kingdom were fenced with thick thorny shrubs. In the Sinhalese kingdom there were only narrow footpaths, and there were no broad roads. There were no bridges across the rivers. All goods had to be carried by men or oxen. Goods were, therefore, expensive and the village folk could get only a very little in exchange for their paddy or arecanut. Salt and salted-fish were very dear. All travelling was on foot. Rich men were carried in palanquins. The king and the high noblemen only possessed horses. Now (in 1888) there are roads covering over 3,000 miles. A railway line of 180 miles is under construction and partly built. Bridges have been built across rivers. Many people possess horses, and there are thousands of

> carts. Because of the railway people travel quickly even over high mountains, comfortably and at little cost.
>
> 'In former days there were no postal services in this island, and they could not post letters. To-day one can despatch a letter from Matara to Jaffna at a cost of four cents. There is the telegraph and telephone, they send messages through electricity.'[20]

Then follows an enumeration of the sufferings the subjects of the Sinhalese kings had to undergo. The account is an improved version of Robert Knox.

This is another summary of Ceylon history. To show how bloodthirsty the Sinhalese were, the writer says, 'There is peace and prosperity now. In the old days there were changes of governments and wars. Eleven Sinhalese kings were compelled to abdicate, four committed suicide, thirteen died in battle, and twenty-eight were killed by the plots of enemies.'

The author laments the neglect of the Vanni, a fertile district during the early days of the Sinhalese. According to the writer it was the fault of the Sinhalese that the Tamil hordes from South India broke the dams of their banks and laid waste the country!

Then follows an apology for foreign rule. 'It is true that now we are under a foreign government. We must, nevertheless, bear in mind that it was a foreign government that held sway in Ceylon long before the advent of the British. The next King but one after Parākramabāhu the Great was a foreigner. The last four kings of Ceylon were Tamils without even a drop of Sinhalese blood in them.[21] Now all Ceylonese can derive every possible benefit from the British Government, and they are eligible for the highest posts in the Government. Already a Sinhalese has been appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court.'

The apology continues. 'No man is perfect. No Government also can be expected to be perfect. Avenues for the advancement of the Ceylonese will be opened up gradually. . . . No only are we free from wicked things, but we also enjoy benefits and advantages which we did not enjoy even under the wisest of our kings.'

The concluding portion of the history (pp. 102 ff.) is a discussion on non-Christian religions. Brahmanism is spoken of as a 'low worship of many gods'. The evil of worshipping Yakṣas is dwelt on. Then the writer comes to Buddhism. 'The religion of the Buddha is good,' the writer says, 'but there are many defects in it. The religion teaches love. But how can brothers and sisters love each other without a father?' Then the writer goes on to speak of the advantages of Christianity.

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[20] The Buddhist author of the *Mahārājāvaliya* (Or. 6606(73)), however, says that in 1866 there was a shortage of rice and a famine, and at that time they fixed telephone wires from Colombo to Kandy and then to Trincomalee, 'to carry state secrets'.

[21] The missionary author, had he read Sinhalese *Viiti* texts, would have been able to discover that good Sinhalese blood was found in the veins of the Nāyakkar rulers of Kandy. Cf. Mārambē, *Trisiṃhaḷe kada im saha vitti*, pp. 67–73.

The history ends with these words: 'Christianity is spreading rapidly all over the island. Very soon the whole country will be Christian. At one time the whole of Europe was full of heathen temples, now there are only the remains of a few of them. We shall see the same in Ceylon, the accomplishment of this will depend on those who have received a Christian education.

'Let all who read this book be first saved from their sins through Jesus Christ. Let them then purify their souls through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Let their final aim be the proclamation of the gospel of Christ among their fellow men.'

Thus ends the *Rājāvaliya*, written for the use of teachers and pupils in Sinhalese schools of the nineteenth century, and many a reader must have mistaken the work for a genuine *Rājāvaliya*.

Language of the Simhala-Rājāvaliya

The missionary writer's knowledge of Sinhalese was very poor. His acquaintance with original historical works also may have been limited, for we find that he could not spell some common names properly. But, what is worse is this, he refers to the Buddha and Buddhist monks with the least respect or honour. Higher grades of pronouns, verbs and syntactical constructions are used when referring to British Governors, than when speaking of the Buddha or the monks. Everything Buddhist is spoken of in a contemptuous manner. Without further comment, an examination of a text-book on Ceylon history like the *Simhala-Rājāvaliya* no doubt will prove that it was written to make the Sinhalese people dislike their old civilization, which was based on Buddhism, to show the advantages of the British rule, which was based on the Christian faith, and in short to lead the Buddhists to give up their religion, and make good and satisfied British subjects of them, if not good Christians.

The National Historians

Lankākathāva, 'History of Ceylon',[22] by Simon de Silva, is quite different from the missionary production just dealt with. The writer was a Roman Catholic, but he received his Sinhalese education under the venerable scholar Dharmakīrti Dharmārāma Mahāthera. He held the office of Chief Translator to the Colonial Government and thus we find him somewhat guarded when he expressed his national sentiments. The reader nevertheless will notice the depth of feeling with which the author wrote, especially when he comes to the last days of the Sinhalese kingdom of Kandy. He ends the story of the capture of the last king of Kandy thus: 'King

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[22] Government Printer, Colombo, 1909.

Śrīvikramarājasiṃha was taken captive on the 18th of February 1815. Thus on that day the Sinhalese kingdom which increasingly flourished for 2357 years, came to an end.' (p. 201.)

A few points may be brought out to show the historical acumen of de Silva. (*a*) He examines the causes for the failure of the Portuguese to set up a steady government (p. 122). (*b*) He discusses the weakness of the British in the administration of their provinces; he points at the illegality of their dealings with the Sinhalese king's minister, Pilimatalavvē (pp. 165–166). At the same time he tries to exonerate Governor North (p. 167). (*c*) He defends the action of Śrīvikramarājasiṃha in executing the family of Ähälēpola (p. 175).

Panegyrics, Bardic Literature, etc.

We have not dealt here with other types of Sinhalese literature, which also record historical events. These include panegyrics, war ballads, popular ballads and other popular literature which have come down in oral tradition (sometimes reduced to writing). An account of them, from a literary point of view, may be found in the present writer's *Sinhalese Literature*, chapters XVIII, XXI, XXII, and XXIII.

7. THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF INDIAN BARDIC LITERATURE[1]

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While historical writing in the western sense begins in India only with the Mughal period, there has since early times been an institution whereby knowledge of past events both mythical and historical was handed on from generation to generation. In many parts of the country professional bards and genealogists were attached to communities of varying status, and the records and oral tradition of such bards were the repositories of a considerable volume of historical material. The relations between a bard and his hereditary patrons conformed among all castes to a similar pattern, modelled on the *jajmani* system, and in many Indian communities the bards occupied until recently an extremely important position. The bards of the more advanced communities have relied largely on written records, and it is with such written bardic literature that we are here mainly concerned. We shall see, however, that the illiterate bards of Tribal India fulfil much the same function as the more educated bards of such advanced areas as Rajasthan and Gujarat, where the institution has reached the highest point of development.

A systematic effort to collect and preserve the poetry of the bards attached to the Rājputs was begun in 1914, when the Asiatic Society of Bengal sponsored a 'Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana'. This survey was directed by Dr. L. P. Tessitori, and it is to his reports and notes published periodically in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* during the years 1914 to 1919 that we owe a great deal of information on the bardic poetry of Rajputana. According to Tessitori (1914, p. 337) bardic and historical manuscripts were then still to be found in the possession of bards of Chāraṇ and Bhāṭ caste and of Rājput *jāgīrdars* and Jain *jatis*.

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[1] T. N. Dave (1951), 'The Institution of Bards in Western India', *The Eastern Anthropologist*, iv, 166–71. Verrier Elwin (1949), *Myths of Middle India* (Bombay). A. K. Forbes (1924), *Râs Mâla. Hindu Annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India*, ed. H. G. Rawlinson (London). Stephen Fuchs (1950), *The Children of Hari: Study of the Nimar Balahis in the Central Provinces* (Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik, vol. 8). C. von Fürer-Haimendorf (1948), *The Raj Gonds of Adilabad. A Peasant Culture of the Deccan.* (The Aboriginal Tribes of Hyderabad, vol. III), London. (1951), 'The Pardhans: The Bards of the Raj Gonds', *The Eastern Anthropologist*, iv, 172–84. R. V. Russell and R. B. Hira Lal (1916), *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London), vol. ii, article: Bhat. L. P. Tessitori (1914), 'A Scheme for the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S., x, 373–410 (1919), 'A Progress Report on the Work done during the year 1917 in connection with the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S., xv, 5–79. James Tod (1829–32), *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (reprinted 1950 by Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London).

The origin of the institution of family-bards is still uncertain, but it would seem that its efflorescence extends from approximately A.D. 1400 to A.D. 1800 Tessitori (1919, pp. 20, 21) suggested that the hereditary bards and genealogists of the Rājputs of earlier periods were Brahmans known as *Bhaṭṭas*, and these composed panegyrics in honour of their patrons and their patrons' ancestors in Sanskrit. With the exception of such epic Sanskrit poems, there existed neither chronicles nor other historical records until the beginning of the fourteenth century. The development of a vernacular (*bhāsā*) literature at that time and the replacement of Sanskrit by the vernacular both in poetic and ordinary writings resulted, according to Tessitori, in the popularization of epic poetry. What had been the prerogative of a few learned Brahmans, now offered wide scope to Chāraṇs and other poets of lower caste-status. Gradually even the Brahman *Bhaṭṭas* began to compose in the vernacular, and today there is no fundamental difference between Bhāṭs and Chāraṇs, the two principal castes of bards in Rajputana and Gujarat.

Each family of bards is attached to a number of Rājput families and this relationship, which is comparable to that between family-priest (*purohit*) and client, is strictly hereditary. The bards preserve the genealogical records of their Rājput patrons and pay them periodic visits, carrying with them on their journeys cart-loads of ledger-books (*vahi*) containing their patrons' family registers (Dave, 1951, p. 168). Traditionally a bard follows his father's profession, learns from him his repertoire of songs and the technique of writing and reciting poetry, which serves both to chronicle historical facts and to glorify his Rājput patrons.

In past ages the duties of Bhāṭ and Chāraṇ bards involved frequent attendance on their patrons, and many a bard accompanied his patron on his campaigns and thus obtained first-hand information about the warriors' heroic deeds. Some bards were themselves skilled fighters, but the persons of those who did not actively participate in the fighting were held sacrosanct (Dave, 1951, p. 167).

At the death of a bard his records passed to his sons, and the bards thus became the permanent custodians of the family histories and genealogists of most of the ruling clans of Rajasthan.

Every bard maintains one book (*vahi*) or section of a book for each lineage of his patrons; if the patron is the head (*tilayut*) of the lineage, the *vahi* traces his descent as far as the founder of the clan, who is in many cases a legendary figure; but if the patron is a member of a cadet-branch (*phutayo*) his descent is traced only as far as the branch ancestor, the information on the remoter ancestors being obtainable from the *vahi* of the senior line.

The *vahi* is, in the words of A. K. Forbes (1924, ii, 264), 'a record of authority by which questions of consanguinity are determined when marriage is on the tapis, and disputes relating to the division of ancestral property are decided'. It was the duty of the bard at each periodical visit to each of his patrons to register the births, marriages and deaths which had taken place in the family since his last circuit, as well as to chronicle all events worthy of remark which had occurred in the fortunes of his patron. In return for this service he received a fee, the amount of which varied according to his patron's status. In the case of a ruling prince, the registration fee for a birth may have been as much as Rs. 1,000, and some of the bard families rose to great prosperity and held *jāgīrs* under such rulers as Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bikanir, Dhrangadra, Bhavnagar and Junagadh.

By extolling the virtues of liberal patrons and satirizing those who gave inadequately the bards were able to extort large gifts. At the wedding of a ruler's daughter, for instance, the chief family bard would in some cases receive as much as a lakh of rupees. Such ceremonial gifts became therefore known as 'Lakh Pasaru' and according to Russell and Hira Lal (1916, ii, 256) a bard still alive in 1916 was known to have received three Lakh Pasarus from the Raja of Jodhpur.

The repertory of the bards of Rajasthan consists of epic poems of two main categories: (*a*) Those relating to Rājput heroes of ancient times whose fame extends throughout Rajasthan. Such epic poems are the general heritage of all Bhāṭ and Chāraṇ bards. (*b*) Compositions relating to particular Rājput houses and hence not of general interest. These are usually known only to the bards specifically attached to the Rājput house whose members figure in the ballads. Such compositions are in part ancient and in part comparatively modern. Both types of poems are composed in two archaic languages known as Diṅgaḷa and Piṅgaḷa. According to Tessitori (1914, p. 375), these are two distinct languages, the former being the old local vernacular of Rajputana, which, though long a dead language, has survived in the songs of the bards. Piṅgaḷa, on the other hand, was the Braja *bhāsā*, a polite language used by poets.

Bardic poetry includes compositions of various styles: poems of some length known as *vela*, *jhūlana*, *and rāso*, and short historical songs known as *gīta* and *kavitta*. The generic term for all bardic poems is *phutakara gīta*, and according to Tessitori (1914, p. 382) there exist in Rajasthan extensive manuscript collections comprising compositions of all types of *phutakara gīta*. Many of them are anonymous but the authorship of some poems is known.

As to the value of the bardic poems as historical records there is a wide divergence of views. A. K. Forbes (p. 265) expressed the opinion that whereas the bardic accounts are accurate in so far as they reflect social conditions, they are very defective in so far as chronological sequence is concerned. Forbes believed that the genealogies, as long as they do not ascend to fabulous periods, may be considered largely correct. He implies, however, that parts of the bardic accounts are not intelligible without oral explanation, and it was indeed the bards' practice to intersperse the recitation of family histories recorded in their *vahi* with *ex tempore* explanations and amplifications.

Neither Forbes nor Tod, whose *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829–32) was largely based on bardic literature, undertook a critical analysis of their sources. Such an analysis is contained in one of Tessitori's articles (Tessitori, 1919, pp. 17–31) and from this it appears that a clear distinction must be made between the bardic poetry and the prose chronicles of Rajasthan. The historical poems and commemorative songs fall directly or indirectly within the former section; and these are almost exclusively the production of such bards as Chāraṇs and Bhāṭs. The prose chronicles, on the other hand, are to a very large extent not the production of bards, and can be divided into two categories: chronicles proper and genealogies. The former, generally known in Rajputana as *khyāta*, commonly relate the history of a Rājput state in chronological order, reign after reign, always keeping the rulers in prominent view. The genealogical works are locally known as *pidhiyāvālī*, meaning 'series of generations', and are generally in the form of lists of bare names without dates.

Tessitori (1919, p. 20) considers that these genealogies are the older works, and points to the fact that the custom of keeping genealogical records of kings is at least as ancient as the *Purāṇas*. The question of authorship of these genealogical works is still doubtful. Tessitori considered it unlikely that the orderly and accurate *pidhiyāvālis* of three centuries ago were the work of the ancestors of bards, whose 'rough, disconnected unintelligible genealogical lists' compare most unfavourably with the older records. He suggested that 'while ordinary Bhāṭas were going about begging village for village and door for door with their genealogical scribbles as they do today, other men better trained in methodical and accurate work were compiling the *pidhiyāvālis* in the capital, probably in part from the very data furnished to them by the travelling Bhāṭas'.

Internal and external evidence shows, according to Tessitori (1919, pp. 24, 25), that the chronicles proper (*khyatas*) came into evidence towards the end of the sixteenth century A.D., and it seems that the impulse responsible for their composition emanated from the court of Akbar, whose example must have inspired the Rājput princes. Tessitori emphasizes that the only people who could have compiled such historical records were the princes' officials, the *Pancholis* and *Mahājanas*, collectively known as *mutsaddis*. Only they could write correctly and view the facts in an objective manner. They were trained in business transactions and methodical accurate work, whereas the bards have never had a reputation for orthographical and intelligible writing.

To the princes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries those more or less objective narratives of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century chroniclers were no longer acceptable. Conscious of possible outside reactions they were anxious to omit or disguise any passage that might be a possible target for criticism or ridicule. They preferred the pompous eloquence of Bhāṭs and Chāraṇs to the plain language of the historical records and commissioned their bards to recast the old chronicles in a poetic form. According to Tessitori it was such historical poems on which Tod based his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, while the real chronicles remained for the greater part unknown to him (Tessitori, 1919, p. 18).

The compilation of historical records by the officials (*mutsaddis*) of the princes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries thus did not impair the position of the bards, and Chāraṇs particularly remained influential in many of the states of Rajasthan, Saurāṣṭra, and Gujarat. The Mahārājās of Mysore who aspired to Rājput status adopted the institution of bards, and the Mahārājās of Kashmir appointed hereditary Chāraṇ bards only a generation ago. Even such Muslim princes as those of Junagadh, Palampur and Radhanpur considered their *darbārs* incomplete without state bards (Dave, 1951, p. 170).

The institution of bards is not confined to the cultural sphere of Rajasthan and Gujarat, however, nor is it only the ruling classes who have hereditary bards. Among the Balāhis, untouchable weavers of Madhya Pradesh, for instance, there are chroniclers and genealogists, who correspond to the Bhāṭs and Chāraṇs of the Rājputs, and are also known as Bhāṭ. The account of these Balāhi Bhāṭ contained in *The Children of Hari* by Stephen Fuchs (1950) is in certain respects fuller than that of any account of the bards of the Rājputs. Thus, it states that the sons of a Balāhi Bhāṭ, after his death, divide the villages in their father's charge among themselves, and copy from the original register the names of the clans and families of their villages in a new register, for their own use. The original book remains with the eldest son. On his tours through the villages the Bhāṭ does not carry with him the original register, but a copy of it, lest his original register should suffer or be lost on the journey.

The Bhāṭ's register is held in great esteem; by the Bhāṭ because it is his main source of livelihood, by other Balāhis because it contains the history of their clans and families. The Bhāṭs are often good singers and when they visit their patrons they sing in the evening for the entertainment of the villagers. They do not only recount the history and mythology of the Balāhi clans, but being literate are also familiar with Hindu mythology and have in their repertoire a number of episodes from the *Rāmayāṇa* and other Hindu epics (Fuchs, pp. 75, 76).

Bards and chronicles are found not only in literate or semi-literate communities. Attached to the Raj Gonds of Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad is a caste of bards who preserve their repertory of myths and legends as well as genealogical data solely by oral tradition. They are known as Pardhans or Pataris, and their role in Gond society provides a striking parallel to that of the Bhāṭs and Chāraṇs among the more advanced society of Rajasthan. A few of the epic poems of the Pardhans have been recorded by anthropologists (Elwin, 1949; Fürer-Haimendorf, 1948), but as they are handed down from father to son by oral tradition, they do not fall within the frame of reference of this discussion. How this close association between the Gond peasants and a caste of artists and chroniclers originated is still open to question (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1951, p. 183). Castes of hereditary bards are found throughout many parts of Southern India, but information on their status and the literature they have produced is virtually non-existent. It would seem, however, that the position of the Bhaṭrazus vis-à-vis the Velmas, Reddis, and Kapus of Telingana is very similar to that of the Bhāṭs vis-à-vis their Rājput patrons.

There are two possible explanations for these similarities: (*a*) The institution of bards attached to individual clans and families may have been very widespread among the more advanced peasant populations of India, and the Bhāṭs of Gujarat and the Pardhans of the Deccan may have to be considered as two more or less independent manifestations of the same institution. (*b*) The second and on the whole more probable possibility is that the institution developed in the feudal society of a population commonly described by the generic term Rājputs, and that the Gonds and other communities which came in touch with Rājputs adopted the institution and attracted some of the Rājputs' bards to their service. The Bhaṭrazus, for instance, have the tradition that they were a northern caste and were first invited south by King Pratāpa Rudra of the Kākaṭīya dynasty of Warangal (A.D. 1295–1323). After the decline of the dynasty, they may have sought new patrons and perhaps in this manner they came to attach themselves to local feudal chiefs and thus became the bards and genealogists of Velmas and Reddis.

While it is doubtful whether a study of bardic literature, whether recorded in writing or handed down by oral tradition, could throw very much new light on the political history of India, it is probable that this literature, only small parts of which have become known in the West, will be found to constitute a valuable repository of information on the cultural history of feudal times. In so far as the written records of Bhāṭs and Chāraṇs are concerned photographic methods of duplication could preserve the most important ones for the use of historians, but the oral literature of such bards as Pardhans or Bhaṭrazus can be saved only by the laborious method of work with individual informants.

There remains, however, the theoretical problem, why in a country with an ancient tradition of literary achievements legendary accounts in the form of the bardic poems and epics have for long periods taken the place of objective historical chronicles, which seem to have come into existence only under Muslim influence. Two factors may have contributed to this attitude towards the past:

1. As long as mythical accounts of the origin of tribal groups and clans, of the establishment of customs and institutions by direct divine intervention, and the relevance of mythical events as a charter for present-day behaviour, were taken at their face value, there was the tendency to telescope intervening generations and events, which seemed comparatively unimportant, and to focus the attention of the bards and chroniclers on those distant times when deities and semi-divine ancestors instituted the framework within which social forces have since operated. This tendency can still be observed among the Pardhans, whose epic poems tell in great detail of the origin of the Gond race and of the establishment and early fortunes of the four main exogamous clan-groups or phratries, but who have little to say about the origin of individual clans and lineages whose ramification falls within a more recent period. The paramount importance of events in the mythical past overshadows the events of a time which might otherwise have well left fuller traces in tribal memory and bardic accounts.

2. The Indian attitude to society is characterized by a preoccupation with one's own caste group, and this attitude is reflected in most of the bardic epics. Their authors' interest is centred in the past of their own immediate group or, in the case of the Rājputs' bards, in that of their patrons. Historic events are thus seen exclusively from the angle of such small social units, and bardic compositions betray no effort to assess or even describe the history of a geographic region involving the interaction of different tribal or caste groups, but concentrate as a rule on the past of individual clans or chiefly lineages. The absorption in the affairs of a narrow community, which to the caste-bound mind constitutes society largely to the exclusion of any interest in the doings of the other co-inhabitants of the country, has not unnaturally the effect of reducing historical accounts—whether committed to paper or preserved by oral tradition—to heavily biased histories of limited social units, be they tribal groups, castes, clans, or princely families.

Owing to these inherent limitations of bardic compositions, a systematic study of the historical data contained in this type of literature would have to be based on the poems and epics of a large number of bards of as many castes as possible. By complementing and correcting one another such compositions may provide a fairly full picture of the cultural history of a region, even if their value as materials for chronology and political history proves to be insignificant.

8. NUMISMATISTS AND HISTORICAL WRITING

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Introduction

The historian of ancient India differs from the historian of modern India in his training, methods and results. The problems which face him are not those with which the modernist may be familiar. Like the historian of many other ancient civilizations, he has not much to do with written 'histories' or 'literary' sources. Very often he has to make use of 'non-literary' or 'unwritten' sources in writing history. Thus he at once broadens the basis of history. By widening his range of material the obsession with 'authority' from which a historian is likely to suffer when using only the 'literary' sources, receives a salutary challenge. The result is that the historian may well get a wider vision, a toleration in outlook and an 'agree to differ' attitude. But sometimes this latitude, depending upon the nature of the sources, makes the historian either too sceptical or too dogmatic. This lopsidedness of his attitude is perhaps due to a lack of scientific training in handling the different types of sources. In fact, the historian of ancient civilizations is often so preoccupied with his sources that he has no scope to develop his subjective ideas in a historical framework. I believe the historian of remoter periods of history can be comparatively more objective in his ideas of history than the modernist. This is clear when we study the works of historians who have written on all periods of Indian history and compare their treatment of each period. If the historian has betrayed his subjectivity in his treatment of the ancient period, this is only when he deliberately chooses to project the ideas of his times and the prejudices of his mind to make unwarranted comparisons and derive results which may serve a particular end, or when he takes advantage of the paucity or absence of his sources, or if he is not competent to interpret a particular type of source material and takes liberties with it.

A knowledge of the nature of the source and of how to handle it is essential for any understanding of the ideas of history in ancient civilizations as well as for estimating the assumptions of the historians. Among the 'non-literary' sources, inscriptions and coins provide the most important materials for writing the history of ancient India. But between them there is a difference in nature. Inscriptions are in fact the earliest form of written history in prose and thus are capable of betraying the historical ideas of their authors. But a small coin has hardly any space for even two complete sentences—scarcely enough in which to detect any coherent idea of history on the part of the king who issued it. Even if we discover some such ideas they are disjointed and they give no knowledge which is not known from other sources. They either confirm or exemplify them. They rarely correct them and never do so to any great extent. They are materials for history no doubt, but beyond that we can expect no definite evidence of historical thought from them. In areas and periods of history where coins alone have played the major part in the reconstruction of history they have not succeeded in presenting more than a skeletal outline, to which even a few sentences in literary sources or inscriptions have proved sufficient to bring flesh and blood.

The Idea of History in Coins

Indian coinage broadly divides itself into two series. First, that which was issued by the kings of foreign origin; and second, that which was struck by those of indigenous origin. A comparison of these two series may be of some use to us.

The coins of the Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Scythians, the Scytho-Parthians, and the Kuṣāṇas bear the names of kings with full titles besides their personal epithets such as *Soter*, *Dikaios*, *Epiphanes*, etc. We never fail, therefore, to know the status of the king, even if it was sometimes merely nominal. The Yavana and Śaka-Pahlava kings use the titles *Basileus* or *Basileus Basileōn*, while the Kuṣāṇas take such titles as *Shao*, *Shaonano*, or *Shaonano Shao*. The Śaka satraps of Western India go one step further in preciseness and tell us not only their own name and status but the name and status of their fathers. But the Indian kings who ruled before the Christian era, when they first issue inscribed coins, are not always particular even to mention the title of *rājā* on them. Even at a later period they do not generally give much importance to these titles. There are, however, a few exceptions for which especial reasons can be advanced. The Gupta kings, again, rarely announce their full titles on their coins though they invariably mention their distinctive personal epithets (*viruda*) such as *Vikrama*, *Parākrama*, or *Mahendra*. There are only a few coin types where such titles as *Mahārājādhirāja*, *Rājādhirāja*, or *Rājā* occur. It is really curious that even though a local Indian king would not hesitate to use grandiloquent titles in his inscriptions, a great emperor might ignore coins as a medium for the display of his temporal power. On the other hand, the Gupta kings are particular to inscribe on their coins legends which express the well-known Indian idea that by the merit acquired by sacrifice or good deeds the king may become equal to the gods or become an Indra and attain heaven. The means by which heaven is attained are sometimes specifically expressed by such phrases as *Karmabhiruttamaiḥ* (by the highest *karmas*) and *sucaritaiḥ* (by good deeds).

Assuming that kings were aware of the fact that coin-legends could serve as propaganda and also that they could be used for perpetuating their fame, it may be suggested that whereas the kings of foreign origin laid emphasis on their material power, and the outward show of regal pomp and grandeur, the Indian kings, who also trumpeted their 'conquest of the whole earth' in inscriptions, preferred on their coins to emphasize their righteous deeds and their belief in the doctrine of *karma*. The 'duty' aspect of kingship was more emphasized than the 'power' aspect. Perhaps this may be the reason why most kings did not care to issue coins with regal titles, or, in the post-Gupta period, often did not bother to strike their own coins at all if normal trade purposes were well served by older coins, no matter whether those coins were issued by the predecessor kings of their own dynasty or by foreign dynasties.

No accepted notion of chronology is revealed in coins. Even the Indo-Greeks and the Kuṣāṇas mention no dates on their coins, although considering their ethnical origins and historical background one might expect this. Kaniṣka started a new system of time reckoning which was followed by his successors, and references to this are found in the Kuṣāṇa inscriptions, but neither he nor his successors dated their coins. It is remarkable that the Śaka satraps of Western India are again in this respect in advance of other kings of foreign origin; their entire series of coinage, spread over three hundred years, is dated. The Guptas, who also started their own era, do not mention dates on their coins, except on their silver issues struck on the pattern of those of the Śakas of Western India, which were meant to circulate in the region conquered by the Guptas from the Śakas. On the other hand we find that certain kings recorded their regnal years on coins, for example, Iśvaradatta, who struck coins in his first and second years of his reign and inscribed the date not in figures but in words (*Rājño Mahākṣatrapasa Iśvaradattasa varṣe prathame* and *Rājño . . . varse dvitāye*). The Maukhari coins and the coins of Pratāpaśīla and Śīlāditya, though kings belonging to the same dynasty and related as father and son, are dated only in regnal years.

Another aspect of India's coinage which may be of interest in understanding ideas of history in ancient India is that it seems that the element of space predominates over the element of time. Indian coin types are essentially local in character and Rapson is correct when he says in his *Introduction to BMC, Andhras, W. Ksatrapas*, etc. (pp. xi–xii):

> 'At no period with which we are acquainted, whether in the history of Ancient or of Medieval India, has the same kind of coinage been current throughout any of the great empires. Each province of such an empire

> has, as a rule, retained its own peculiar coinage and this with so much conservatism in regard to the types and the fabric of the coins, that the main characteristics of these have often remained unchanged, not only by changes of dynasty, but even by the transference of power from one race to another. Homogeneous coinages are to be found only in the case of kingdoms of more restricted area, as for example, in that of Kashmir. In all the more extended dominions—those of the Graeco-Indians and Indo-Scythic princes, of the Guptas, and of the Hūṇas, for instance —a number of distinct varieties were in circulation in different districts at the same time.'

This was the case also with the Śātavāhanas in the Deccan.

Numismatists and Historians

Numismatics provides material for historical writing on ancient civilizations. But when the means itself attains the stature of an end one has to be careful in handling it. Numismatics has become an independent subject of study just as history is, and numismatists have contributed to history while historians have used numismatic evidence for historical writing. For certain periods of history, the historian is also a numismatist, but the numismatist is always also a historian. In fact not only do numismatists have to be historians to enable them to carry out their specialized task of classifying coins, but by the classification of coins they make a substantial contribution to the study of history.

But there is a noticeable difference in the approaches to history of the numismatist and the historian, depending upon the degree to which one is nearer to the other. Taking the example of an eminent numismatist, and quoting his own words:

> 'The word *history* originally meant enquiry, investigation, and not narrative. Yet the historian was almost always a reciter of stories, and not a seeker after knowledge, and from Aristotle to modern times, history has been a form of literature. The general aim of the historian was to give his readers a glowing and rhetorical account of the great events of the past, of the drums and tramplings of conquest, and he had little sympathy with the scientific side of his subject, its slow and laborious investigations and searchings after truth. History the art remained paramount till the nineteenth century, but as a science it has now gained recognition as a distinct subject, and has also raised with it a group of auxiliary sciences which serve either as tools for the purposes of enquiry, or as a basis for testing results. The change has involved a more scrupulous investigation of the sources of historical records. Archives have been reformed, and their contents catalogued; numberless documents have been rescued from oblivion or destruction; and

> learned societies have supplemented and criticised this work, and co-ordinated the results. Every science which deals with human phenomena is in a way an implement in this system by which the past is welded together, but the real auxiliary sciences to history are those which deal with the traces of the past which still exist, the science of language, of writing, of documents, of seals, of coins, of weights and measures, and archaeology in the widest sense of the word. These sciences underlie the whole development of scientific history.' (R. B. Whitehead, 'The Place of Coins in Indian History', *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, ii, 1913–14, 5–20.)

On the other hand, Sir William Tarn, an eminent historian, who has used numismatics for historical writing to the greatest extent, says in the Preface of his book, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*:

> 'I am also aware that history should be written impersonally. But to write this book impersonally was not possible; much of it is spadework, and it had to get written as best it could, other considerations being subordinated to an effort to make the bearing of the rather complex collection of little details clear to the reader . . .'

Later in his Introduction (p. xxii) Sir William says:

> 'The coins of course are all-important, and one cannot overpraise the work done on them by generations of numismatists; it seems to me one of the wonders of scholarship. But the numismatist as such has sometimes been unable to place or explain the facts which he has elicited; naturally so, for he is not expected to be a Hellenistic historian. Again, I can only hope that I have not missed too much; with one or two exceptions, my knowledge of the coins has, of necessity, been confined to printed publications and the unrivalled collection in the British Museum; one is never safe from the unpublished coin in private hands . . . Naturally I am not concerned with the coins as coins, but only as material for history.'

Whitehead and Tarn are good examples respectively of a numismatist whose study has been used to advantage for historical writing and of a historian who has used numismatic material with advantage for writing history; both have occupied themselves with the same period of Indian history. Between them there is a clear distinction, in my opinion; the numismatist tends to treat history as a science and the historian as literature. For the numismatist the method is more important than the 'background'—which we find stressed by Tarn in the above-quoted extract—and accuracy is more important than flourish; in fact, the numismatist is more cautious than the historian. The numismatist, I think, believes that history is a science in its methods and that the means are more important than the end. He is satisfied if he prepares the source-material on a scientific basis and presents his results in a critical manner. This scientific discipline gives him a restraint of judgement and an objective approach which the historian often lacks in his treatment of the same period.

Though there is thus a fundamental difference in the methods and outlook of the numismatist and those of the historian, they may be closer to one another in their assumptions than at first appears, inasmuch as both are products of the time in which they live. When Whitehead sets about the task of preparing a catalogue of the Indo-Greek coins in the Lahore Museum he writes in his Preface:

> 'The intrinsic interest of the coins described in this work is great, and they make a strong appeal to the favourable notice of collectors, especially to those belonging to that European nation which is the first to have accomplished from the sea what Greece did from the land, and so may be regarded as the legitimate successor of the Greeks in the Punjab.'

But in these lines Whitehead is simply betraying the ideas of his time and of the group to which he belonged. Either he was merely thinking along the lines of earlier administrator historians of ancient India such as Smith, or he was just anticipating the views put forth in the *Cambridge History of India*, where time and again the invasion of Alexander was deliberately described as the 'European' invasion of India, and where parallels were sought between the army movements of Alexander in the Punjab and the operation of the English army in the same region. One or two quotations from the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i, will suffice:

> 'Thus the European, at his first arrival at the Gates of India, found India divided against itself.' (p. 350.)

> 'The Europeans who had followed Alexander so far into Asia now entered the region in which the armies of the English operate today.' (p. 352.)

But although Whitehead may have such assumptions as a result of his belonging to a particular age and group, his assumptions do not sway him to the degree to which the historian, who treats history more as literature than science, is swayed, and he stops to pause and examine his coins and ultimately says only what his coins can tell. His writing, which is full of colons and semi-colons, does not seem to present before us a story but just certain conclusions he can draw from his coins. He does not develop his material derived on the basis of his assumptions. He just stops at the point where the historical imagination is needed.

But this is not the case with Tarn, the historian. When he dreamed of his book *The Greeks in Bactria and India* for forty years, it was because he thought:

> 'It is unfortunate that in Great Britain, and I think everywhere, the story of the Greeks in India has been treated as part of the history of India alone. For in the history of India the episode of Greek rule has no meaning; it is really a part of the history of Hellenism, and that is where its meaning resides.' 'The Greek empire of Bactria and India was a Hellenistic state.'

Tarn boldly makes no secret of his motives. He clearly tells us what he wants to do. He says 'every story has a background and the background to mine is the Middle East'. Traces of the prejudice with which he starts and the extent to which his conclusions are forced home with the arguments of a clever lawyer can be found in his book on almost every page.

Tarn is not satisfied in discovering in Demetrius another Alexander, according to his own conception of the latter, but he cleverly makes the suggestion that 'the Maurya dynasty was descended from, or anyhow connected with, Seleucus. But Demetrius was a Seleucid on the distaff side; and when the Mauryan line became extinct, he might well have regarded himself, if not as the next heir, at any rate as the heir nearest at hand. His plan to revive the Mauryan empire would then really have meant that he proposed to enter upon his inheritance.' (pp. 152–3.)

One aspect for which, according to Tarn, the story of the Greeks in the East is notable, is that it is 'a unique chapter in the dealings of Greeks with the people of Asia'. The following paragraph of his Conclusion may be found of interest:

> 'But the successes of Euthydemus and his son were bought at a price. Naturally we do not know exactly what the co-operation of Greek and Asiatic meant in their hands, or how far, if at all, they limited their own autocracy by right conferred upon their native subjects. But dim as is our sight in the historical twilight which is all that has been vouchsafed to us, two things stand out sharply enough: that some Indians saw in Demetrius something resembling the ideal King of Justice of their own traditions, and that many of Demetrius' Greek subjects were not in sympathy with his policy, just as many of Alexander's Macedonians had disliked his policy with regard to Persia . . . many of the Greeks of Bactria undoubtedly preferred the simple nationalist policy of the hellenising Antiochus to what they must have considered the pro-native policy of Demetrius; Demetrius is not the only king in history who has fallen because his ideas were too advanced for the majority of his subjects to follow them. The most important fact in the history of the Greek East is that something not very unlike the modern struggle between

nationalism and co-operation was fought out two thousand years ago under the shadow of the Hindu Kush.' (p. 412.)

Tarn is a hero-worshipper. He worshipped Alexander as he did Demetrius. He loves writing of the individual and his adventure; he admires experiment and is tolerant of well-intentioned failures which sometimes he is not prepared to admit as failures at all. Significant is the last paragraph of his Conclusion:

> 'The story of the Euthydemid dynasty is then in one sense, the story of a courageous experiment which failed, though there is nothing to show that it need have failed but for external interference. But the experiment is only one aspect of it. In our mechanical age today, when the hopes, or the fears of many are that the future will be a future of men thinking and acting in droves, at the mercy of mass belief and mass propaganda and little less mechanical than the machines they serve, it may please a few here and there to go back for a moment to a simpler and less sophisticated world, a world of wonderful chances for the individual, where great risks might still bring great prizes for those who ventured. It is with some such thoughts in mind that I have attempted to see what could be recovered, if only in barest outline, of the lost story of the Greeks in the Further East and of the dynasty which so nearly led them to amazing success. For one thing about that story is sure: win or lose, succeed or fail, it is the story of a very great adventure.'

What is true of Whitehead is true of most numismatists, whereas what is true of Tarn is perhaps not true of all historians. But the fact remains that numismatics is one of those 'unwritten sources' which give scope to the historian to wander off into the land of romance, if he is not disciplined in understanding the limitations of the source he is using.

It is true to say that for such periods of Indian history where numismatics is the major source, those who have been trained to tackle coins have been more objective in presenting the story than the historian, and their treatment has always been critical and balanced. It is difficult to find preconceptions in the writings of Rapson and more so in those of Allan. The chapters in *The Cambridge Shorter History*, written by John Allan, exhibit a fair balance of science and literature in history.

9. HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN SOCIAL ORDER

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There is hardly any work exclusively devoted to the history of the social structure in ancient India, but there are many books on the different aspects of this subject, especially the caste system. A recent writer has listed 5000 books on caste.[1] But historians can claim very little credit for this vast amount of literature, which is largely the work of ethnologists, sociologists, statisticians, economists, missionaries, and caste organizations. Most of this material deals with caste in recent times. Nevertheless, books dealing with the origin and growth of caste are not so few as to make an exhaustive survey possible. Therefore this paper does no more than indicate some broad lines of historiography as revealed from important works on caste and such allied subjects as family, marriage, the position of women, etc., in ancient India.

The modern study of the ancient Indian social order owed its inception to the policy of the East India Company, which could not govern an alien people without some knowledge of their institutions. The preface to *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (London, 1776), one of the first English works which have some bearing on the early social history of India, states that 'the importance of the commerce of India and the advantages of a territorial establishment in Bengal' could be maintained only by 'an adoption of such original institutes of the country, as do not intimately clash with the laws or interests of the conquerors'.[2] In his preface to the translation of the *Manu Smṛti* (Calcutta, 1794), Sir William Jones, the father of modern Indology, adds that if this policy is pursued, 'the well-directed industry' of 'many millions of Hindu subjects . . . would largely add to the wealth of Britain'.[3] Four years later, on the basis of these sources, Colebrooke wrote an essay on 'Enumeration of Indian classes',[4] which appeared to him among the most remarkable institutions of India.[5] Soon after (1818) those sources were utilized by Mill to describe the caste system in his *History of India*. While discussing the disabilities of the *śūdras* he came to the conclusion that the vices of caste subordination were carried to a more destructive point among the Hindus than among any other people,[6] and remarked that the hideous society of the Hindus continued in his times. But from the same sources Elphinstone (1841) deduced that the condition of *śūdras* 'was much better than that of the public slaves under some ancient republics, and, indeed, than that of the villains of the middles ages, or any other servile class with which we are acquainted'.[7] He also perceived that such a servile class did not exist any longer in his time.[8]

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[1] Stated by J. H. Hutton, *Caste in India*, 2nd ed. (O.U.P. (Bombay), 1951), p. ix. This seems to be the work of W. H. Gilbert, *Caste in India*, Cyclostyled copy (Washington, 1948). I have been able to see only pt. I of this work which contains 1970 entries.

[2] *Vivādārṇavasetu*, trans. into English by N. B. Halhed. Translator's Preface, p. ix. This work was translated from English into German in 1778.

[3] *Institutes of Hindu Law*, Preface, p. xix. Cf. Discourse of Colebrooke in the first general meeting of *RAS* (15 March 1823), *Essays* (London, 1873), i, 1–2.

[4] *Essays*, ii, 157–70.

But there is no doubt that many age-old social practices continued into the nineteenth century. The glaring contrast between the rising industrial society of England and the old decaying society of India[9] attracted the attention of the educated intelligentsia, who were being permeated with the spirit of nationalism. They realized that the practices of *satī*, lifelong widowhood, child marriage, and caste endogamy were great obstacles to national progress. Since these practices were supposed to derive sanction from the *Dharmasūtras*, it was felt that necessary reforms could be effected easily if they could be proved to be in consonance with the sacred texts. Thus in 1818 Rammohan Roy published his first tract against *satī*, in which he tried to show that, according to the *śāstras*, it was not the best way for the salvation of a woman.[10] In the fifties of the same century Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar ransacked *smṛti* literature in order to make out a case for widow remarriage.[11] In the seventies Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Ārya Samāj, brought out a collection of original Sanskrit texts called the *Satyārthā-prakāśa* to support widow remarriage, rejection of caste based on birth,[12] and the *śūdras*' right to Vedic education.[13] We do not know how far the early social reformers drew inspiration from the contemporary works of Muir,[14] who tried to prove that the belief in the origin of the four *varṇas* from the primeval man did not exist in ancient times,[15] and from those of Weber, who presented the first important critical study of the caste system on the basis of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the

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[5] Ibid., 157.

[6] James Mill, *The History of India* (London, 1820), ii, 166; i, 166–9; 169, fn. 1. It seems that Mill's generalizations about the history of India exercised the most dominant influence on later British historians.

[7] *The History of India* (London, 1841), i, 34.

[8] Ibid., 107.

[9] In 1902 an elderly Indian writer laments that the brāhmaṇas should be made to take their place below Eurasian (Anglo-Indian) industrialists. J. C. Ghosh, *Brāhmaṇism and Śudra* (Calcutta, 1902), p. 46.

[10] *The English works of Rammohan Roy* (Calcutta, 1901), Introduction, p. xviii; ii, 123–92.

[11] R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works* (Poona, 1927–33), ii, 498.

[12] *Satyārtha-prakāśa* (Ajmer, Saṃvat, 1966), fourth *samullāsa*, pp. 83–92, 113–22.

[13] Ibid., third *samullāsa*, pp. 39, 73–74.

[14] John Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts* (London, 1872–4 edition), i.

[15] Ibid., 159–60.

Sūtras.[16] In the eighties of the same century R. C. Dutt in his work *Civilization in Ancient India*, which enjoyed great influence and popularity,[17] carried forward the reformist approach to the study of ancient Indian society. While pointing out that modern Hindus lose sight of the spirit of the ancient faith, he regrets that the use of spirituous liquor and even crimes do not involve loss of caste in modern times, but penalties are reserved for widow marriage, inter-caste marriage, social intercourse among people descended from the same vaiśya rank, and for voyages and foreign travel. He[18] emphasizes that in ancient times caste never divided and disunited the Āryan people, but rallied them as one man against the aborigines.[19] He regrets that in the course of time caste should have degraded the *vaiśyas* to the rank of the *śūdras.*[20] The writer boasts that no ancient nation held their women in higher honour than the Hindus, but complains that the Hindus have been misjudged and wronged by writers unacquainted with their literature, who received their notions of the women of the East from Turkish and Arab customs.[21] Writing about a decade earlier (1867) than R. C. Dutt, a French woman writer, who wants her work to serve as a guide to the British in regenerating the conquered through the application of the practical spirit of Christianity, impresses upon the Indians the high position of woman in ancient times in order that they may emulate the great characters and sublime actions as depicted in the epics.[22]

On the occasion of the introduction of the Age of Consent Bill in 1891, Sir R. G. Bhandarkar brought out a well-documented pamphlet citing Sanskrit texts to establish that a girl should be married only when she attains maturity. On the other hand B. G. Tilak, to whom any stick was good enough to beat the alien rulers, cited texts against this Bill.[23]

This tendency to quote ancient scriptures in support of modern reforms can be well summed up in the words of R. G. Bhandarkar (1895): 'In ancient times girls were married after they had attained maturity, now they must be married before; widow marriage was in practice, now it has entirely gone out. . . . Interdining among the castes was not prohibited, now the numberless castes cannot have intercommunication of that nature.'[24]

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[16] *Indische Studien*, hrsg. Albrecht Weber, x, 1868, 1–160.

[17] *A History of civilization in Ancient India, based on Sanskrit Literature*, 3 vols. (Calcutta, 1889–90). The first edition of 1000 copies of the first two vols. was exhausted before the third vol. was out in 1890, and the work was translated into the vernaculars of Bombay, Madras and the North Western Provinces (roughly modern U.P.). Another work of Dutt was adopted as a text-book in many schools in Bengal.

[18] Ibid., ii, 103.

[19] Ibid., i, 240.

[20] Ibid., 240–1.

[21] Ibid., 256–7.

[22] C. Bader, *Women in Ancient India* (London, 1930), pp. 333–4.

[23] R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, ii, 538–83. Also see Bhandarkar's criticism of Jolly's article on the 'History of Child marriage', ibid., 584–602.

[24] Ibid., ii, 522–3.

But the attempt of Indian scholars to present their early social institutions in a form more acceptable to the modern mind did not always commend itself to western writers. Thus Sénart (1896) pointed out that the castes have been compared by Hindus of English upbringing with the social distinctions that exist among Europeans, but that they correspond only very remotely to western social classes.[25] Similarly Hopkins (1881) stated that the position of the *śūdra* was not different from that of the American house slave before 1860.[26] Reviewing Hopkins' generalizations, Hillebrandt (1896) held that the position of the *śūdras* should be judged in comparison with the slaves of the ancient world and not in the context of developments in later times.[27]

Criticizing Hopkins, Ketkar (1911) complains that European writers are influenced by their ideas of racial discrimination against the Negroes, and hence unduly exaggerate this in their treatment of the caste system.[28] Ambedkar (1917) also points out that, impregnated by colour prejudices, the European scholars have unduly emphasized the role of colour in the caste system.[29] There seems to be some force in this argument, for Risley (1908) stated that the conquering Āryans behaved towards the conquered Dravidians in the same way as some planters in America behaved to the African slaves whom they imported.[30] Keith was of the opinion that the Āryan contact with the aborigines raised questions of purity of blood very like those which at present agitate the Southern States of the U.S.A. or the whole of the white people in South Africa.[31]

Risley advanced the view that in India races were transformed into castes, that the process of racial fusion was arrested long ago and that therefore no national type could develop as in Europe,[32] deducing therefrom that there were no prospects of the rise of nationalism in India.[33] This view was challenged in articles such as 'Varṇāśrama Dharma and Race fusion in Ancient India' (1917),[34] 'Inter-caste marriage in Buddhist India' (1919),[35] 'Foreign Elements in the Hindu population',[36] which were written to demonstrate the assimilative character and resilience of ancient Indian society. Attempts were made to prove that Indian society had attained a large measure of ethnic-cultural unity,[37] which could form the basis of further national development.

[25] E. Sénart, *Caste in India* (London, 1930), pp. 12–13.

[26] E. W. Hopkins, *Mutual Relations of the Four Castes in Manu* (Leipzig, 1881), p. 102.

[27] F. F. A. Hillebrandt, 'Brāhmaṇen und Südras', *Festschrift für Karl Weinhold* (Breslau, 1896), p. 57.

[28] S. V. Ketkar, *History of Caste in India*, 2 vols. (New York, 1909; London, 1911), i, 9, 78, fn. 3.

[29] *Indian Antiquary*, xlvi, 1917, p. 94.

[30] Sir H. H. Risley, *The People of India* (London, 1915), p. 275.

[31] *Cambridge History of India*, i, 125.

[32] Risley, op. cit., pp. 5, 26.

[33] Ibid., p. 293.

[34] B. K. Sarkar, *Modern Review* (1917), pp. 211 ff.

[35] R. P. Chanda, *Modern Review* (1919), pp. 595 ff.

[36] D. R. Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, xl, 1911, pp. 7 ff.

[37] B. N. Dutt, *Studies in Indian Social Polity* (Calcutta, 1944).

But generally the reformist and nationalist school has derived support from the works of western writers, who evaluate ancient Indian society in a manner different from that in which they judge ancient Indian polity. They point out that oriental despotism was the chief characteristic of the political life of ancient India, a generalization which could very well serve as a justification for the continuity of British rule. But on the whole they present ancient Indian society in a favourable light, which could naturally provide the basis for several social reforms, rendered necessary owing to the needs of administration and introduced by the British during the nineteenth century. Apart from the belief in the community of race and language between the Indo-Āryans and Europeans, the idealization of ancient Indian society was due to the anti-Mohammadan attitude of the British, which is evident in some writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[38] To this was added the admiration for primitive forms of society which is noticeable in eighteenth-century writers such as Rousseau.[39] Although after the Mutiny, and especially from towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was felt necessary by many members of the administration to emphasize divisions of caste, race, language, etc., as a shield against the growing nationalist demands,[40] this attitude was reflected only in the Census Reports and very little affected western writings on ancient Indian society, which continued to follow the old tradition.

The main trend noticeable in the works of recent Indian writers such as Ketkar, Dutt, and Ghurye is to present the caste system in such a way as may help to recast it in response to present requirements.[41] Works on the position of women in ancient India display the same tendency. In his work D. N. Mitter attempts to refute the generally accepted doctrine of the perpetual tutelage of women in Hindu Law.[42] A. S. Altekar indicates the general lines on which the various problems of Hindu women should be tackled in order to get a fairly satisfactory solution.[43] In a recent work it is argued that the scheme of *āśramas* was designed to give wide scope to individuals in the choice of a vocation in life which was best suited to their intellectual capacity and mental inclinations.[44] This is obviously projecting the modern idea of individualism on to ancient society, for, in fact, generally the *varṇa* system gave hardly any option to the individual to choose his occupation, and, as to the *āśramas*, the *śūdra* was entitled only to the life of a householder.

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[38] J. Z. Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events relative to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan* (London, 1765–71), i, 5; iii, 13.

[39] Holwell states that 'the primitive Hindoos . . . subsisted for a long series of ages in holiness, peace, tranquillity and happiness'. Ibid., iii, 218.

[40] Several such statements have been quoted in P. L. Narsu, *The Essence of Buddhism* (Madras, 1912), p. 154, and by G. S. Ghurye, *Caste and Class in India* (Bombay, 1950), pp. 176–7.

[41] Ketkar, op. cit., p. 9; Radhakrishnan's Foreword to P. H. Prabhu's *Hindu Social Institutions* (London, 1939). The works of Dutt and Ghurye display a better historical sense but see Dutt, op. cit., Preface, p. vi.

[42] *The Position of Women in Hindu Law* (Calcutta, 1912), Preface, p. a.

[43] *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization* (Baṇaras, 1938), Preface, p. i.

[44] R. C. Majumdar, *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bombay, 1951), p. 553.

Thus it would appear that problems of ancient Indian society have been largely studied, especially by Indians, against the background of the necessity for social reform. The dominant motives of reform and nationalism have undoubtedly produced valuable works on India's early social life. They helped to establish that the four *varṇas* existed as social classes in the Vedic period and that multiplication of the *jātis* and caste restrictions developed in the period of the *Dharmasūtras*. It was recognized that large numbers of foreign and tribal peoples were absorbed into brāhmaṇical society. It also came to be accepted that widow marriage and *niyoga* prevailed in earlier times when the practices of child marriage and *satī* were absent.

But what appeared to be seamy and ugly in comparison with modern standards came to be either ignored or explained away unconvincingly. For instance, it was argued that the disabilities of the *śūdras* did not reduce their happiness or well-being.[45] In justification of child marriage in the later period it came to be urged that this practice helps a girl to know whom she has to love, before any sexual consciousness has awakened in her.[46] Similarly the permanent dependence of woman came to be justified by arguing that she would make herself ridiculous by claiming an identity of temperament and functions with man.[47] Again, since the need for such reforms as the abolition of *satī*, widow marriage, divorce, etc., was most pressing in the case of the members of the upper *varṇas*, due attention could not be paid to the nature of the social practices of the lower orders. Furthermore, the reformists found it difficult to explain and interpret the contradictory statements in the *Dharmaśāstras*, which constitute our main source for the social history of ancient India. They picked out and focused light on the passages which supported their case without bothering to determine the dominant features of society in different periods.

It is this tendency to concentrate on favourable aspects of early social life that accounts for the almost complete absence of works on the position of the *śūdras* in ancient India. Even European writers gave their attention mainly to the study of the upper classes of Hindu society. Thus Muir devoted 188 pages to the legends of struggles between *brāhmaṇas* and *kśatriyas*.[48] Hopkins (1889) presented a comprehensive study of the 'Position of Ruling Caste in Ancient India'.[49] The admirable work of Fick (1897) on the social organization of north-eastern India also mainly confined itself to the treatment of *kśatriyas*, *brāhmaṇas*, and *gahapatis* or *seṭṭhis*. It is difficult to explain these writers' lack of interest in the fortunes of the lower orders unless we suppose that their vision was circumscribed by the dominant class outlooks both of their own age and of the age they studied. The only monograph on the *śūdras* so far published is by a well-known Indian politician, who confines himself to the question of their origin.[50] The author is entirely dependent for his source-material on translations,[51] and, moreover, he seems to have worked with the fixed purpose of proving a high origin for the *śūdras*—a tendency which has been very much in evidence among the educated sections of lower caste people in recent times. A single passage of the *Sānti Parvan*, which states that the *śūdra* Paijavana performed sacrifice, is sufficient to establish the thesis that *śūdras* were originally *kṣatriyas*.[52] The author does not care to analyse the complex of various circumstances which led to the formation of the labouring class known as the *śūdras*.

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[45] On the basis of the *Śukranīti-sāra*. B. K. Sarkar, *Hindu Sociology* (Allahabad, 1920), pp. 92–95. Cf. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Indian Cameralism* (Madras, 1949), p. 85.

[46] Ketkar, op. cit., pp. 32–33.

[47] H. C. Chakladar, 'Social life in Ancient India'. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, issued by Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee, 1st ed. (Calcutta, 1937), iii, 204.

[48] Op. cit., i, ch. IV.

[49] *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, xiii, 1889, pp. 57–376.

Similarly our knowledge of the untouchables has not advanced much beyond what we learn from the school text-books, quoting from Fa-hsien and Hsüan Tsang. The work on this subject by one of the present leaders of this class advances the ingenious theory that the roots of untouchability lay in the contempt for Buddhism and in the practice of beef-eating.[53] Further, the few articles on slavery do not improve much upon the findings of Rhys Davids on that subject. A work on the origin, growth, nature, and extent of slavery in ancient India still remains a desideratum. Again, although it is argued that the disabilities and privileges of the *varṇas* should be looked upon with the greatest suspicion, no serious attempt has been made to inquire into the nature of economic and politico-legal relations into which the members of the various *varṇas* enter with one another. Generalizations such as 'caste did not cause poverty and did not divide the city into two parts like the East End and West End of London'[54] or 'in ancient India there was no concentration of the prestige of birth, influence of wealth and political office which imparts an aristocratic tinge to social organization and sustains aristocratic government'[55] need a careful examination. Because of their reforming outlook the writers have not bothered themselves about unpleasant questions such as the repeated joint notices of woman and *śūdras* or of woman and property in ancient Indian literature. Such an attitude has also prevented an investigation into the traces of promiscuity, matriarchy, and the position of prostitutes in ancient

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[50] B. R. Ambedkar, *Who were the Shudras?* (Bombay, 1946).

[51] Ibid., Preface, p. iv.

[52] It is to be noticed that in recent caste movements many *śudra* castes claim to be *kṣatriyas*. Thus the Duṣādhas claim to be the descendants of Duḥśāṣana, and the Goālās those of the Yadus.

[53] B. R. Ambedkar, *The Untouchables* (New Delhi, 1948), ch. IV.

[54] S. K. Das, *The Economic History of Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1944), p. 185.

[55] Majumdar, op. cit., p. 311; Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India* (Allahabad, 1928), pp. 7–8.

India,[56] which may have been also the result of a disinclination to accept the theory almost universally held by nineteenth-century anthropologists and still sometimes maintained that marriage developed by way of hetairism and matriarchate.[57] A pioneer attempt was made to examine questions like these by S. C. Sircar in his work *Some Aspects of the Earliest Social History of India*,[58] but that line of research has not been pursued further.

The study of the lower orders in ancient India has not only been ignored, but, strange as it may seem, in some cases they appear to have been held in the same contempt by modern writers as they were held by the members of the upper *varṇas* in ancient times. It is stated that child marriage originated among the lower classes, while the *Dharmaśāstra* rules leave no doubt that it first began among the three upper *varṇas*.[59] It is said that women had a higher position among the upper classes, while the opposite seems to have been the case. The climax is reached when on the basis of his study of ancient Indian society a writer prescribes sexual self-control and abstinence for the 'Brahman' and the use of contraceptives for people of the lowest *varṇa*.[60]

Most of the available works on the subject hardly mark the main phases of social change. Jolly's *Hindu Law and Custom*,[61] which is a text-book in many Indian universities, presents a good analysis of family life and the position of woman in Hindu society, but it does not present an integrated picture. Although the author discusses the dates of his sources, he fails to introduce this historical perspective in the treatment of his subject, with the result that we get very little idea of changes in the social order.[62] The only distinction made in such books is the one between Vedic and post-Vedic periods. Thanks to the pioneer labours of Europeans, especially German Indologists, the basic facts about the social organization during the Vedic period are fairly well established. Indians have not progressed much in this field. Their only concern has been to establish that all was good in the Vedic period and that degeneration set in in post-Vedic times. The treatment of society in the *Cambridge History*, vol. i, is not done chronologically but literature-wise so that the total picture of society in a particular phase is lacking. By now the material bearing on social aspects in the Pāli texts has been examined by Fick, Rhys Davids, and R. N. Mehta, in the Jain texts by J. C. Jain and B. C. Law, in the epics by

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[56] J. J. Meyer, however, devotes one chapter (ix) to this subject. *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1952).

[57] Ibid., p. 398.

[58] London, 1928.

[59] *Viṣṇu Smṛti* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vii), xxiv, 41 (with fn. on 41). The commentator seems to have professed later ideas in the explanation of this passage.

[60] G. H. Mees, *Dharma and Society* (The Hague, 1935), pp. 189–90.

[61] Calcutta, 1928 (tr. from the German edn. of 1896).

[62] Jolly had reserved the treatment of classes and castes for his work *State Antiquities*, but it was never published.

Hopkins and Meyer, and in the *Dharmaśāstras* by Jolly, Jayaswal, Kane, R. C. Hazra, and other scholars, but a complete sketch of the social structure on the basis of all these sources is not to be found anywhere. The first important attempt of this kind has been made in the Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan series on *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, but it has suffered for three reasons. Firstly, the *Dharmasūtras* and *Gṛhyasūtras*, which are definitely works of post-Vedic times, are included in the Vedic period. Secondly, writers have failed to distinguish between the didactic and narrative portions of the epics. And thirdly, since the sections on society have been done by several hands,[63] there is not much idea of development in the treatment of the theme. Probably the main reason for not stressing the process of social development has been the very widely held belief in the conservative and unchanging character of the Indian people.[64] Like the Chinese and the Egyptians, the Indians are believed to be an unchanging people.[65] Even those who subscribe to the materialist interpretation of history have paid very little attention to the fact of social development because of the basic formulation of Karl Marx about the unchanging character of Asian society before the advent of the Industrial Revolution. It is true that in the pre-Industrial period, unlike changes in dynasty, social changes may have been very slow, but it would be wrong to proceed on the axiom that they were entirely absent.

Interest in the study of the ancient Indian social order in Europe and India has been also stimulated by a sense of revolt against the over-materialistic life which has been seen as the result of the progress of science and the Industrial Revolution. The old family life is being shattered and the bonds of the former control of man over woman are being loosened. Perhaps in order to restore the balance the old Indian ideal is invoked. In her book *Women in Ancient India* (1867) a French writer feels the necessity of refreshing 'ourselves' (i.e. Europeans) from more life-giving and generous sources from India where society has a sense of duty dominating all affections, and a feeling of respect for family life, all presenting a nearly Christian atmosphere.[66] She points out that the moral elevation of the Greeks was much below that of the Indians.[67] To quote the author: 'in what century, in what country, in what literature, could there be found a more admirable type than that of Sītā?'[68] Similar ideas are repeated by the German Indologist Meyer in 1915.[69] In his opinion no literature could provide more lovely songs of the faithful wife's love for her husband than the poem of Damayantī and that of Sāvitrī.[70] He further states that as regards woman the Old Indian books display a deeply ethical spirit, a wholesomeness in contrast to the often empty frivolity—the nauseating filthiness and vulgarity—that marks most of the literature of the Middle Ages, old and modern French literature, and even many highly praised later and latest German writings.[71] Naturally the belief in progress does not make any sense to Meyer.[72] He feels the necessity of 'feeding on the marvellous works of the Buddha, Jesus, etc.'.[73] The tendency to prescribe precepts and practices of ancient Indian society as a panacea for the social evils of the West reaches its culmination in a work *Dharma and Society* by a minor Dutch Indologist G. H. Mees, published about twenty years ago. The writer holds that the ideal of the *varṇa* system is of universal and permanent value and can be applied to all kinds of societies irrespective of time and place. He thinks that the *varṇa* ideal was a natural and organic hierarchy, which degenerated when artificial distinctions began to be made in the form of the caste system.[74] Scared by the exaltation of Labour and its desire to climb higher in the hierarchy of power,[75] he thinks that only the sense of *varṇa* (i.e. natural hierarchy) can unite people, who are divided by class-consciousness, into a whole.[76] Therefore he recommends that the West should benefit by realizing the fundamental composition of human society as developed in India.[77] He also seems to have some leanings towards Fascism and National-Socialism, which, in his opinion, are movements of the ruling *varṇa* to make an end of 'mixture of *varṇas*' in matters of government, for, according to the theory of *varṇa*, classes corresponding to lower *varṇas* should have no legislative powers and should not criticize the government policy.[78]

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[63] V. M. Apte, R. K. Mookerji, R. C. Majumdar and U. N. Ghoshal.

[64] Majumdar, op. cit., iii, 14.

[65] Cf. E. J. Rapson, *Cambridge History of India*, i, 53–54.

[66] Bader, op. cit., Preface, pp. viii–ix.

[67] Op. cit., p. 223.

[68] Op. cit., p. 222.

[69] Op. cit., pp. 215, 340.

[70] Op. cit., p. 215.

The views of Mees have been treated in some detail because they also find favour with some Indian writers, who glorify the old system of family and *varṇa* to stem the tide of social changes. Thus the specious argument of equality in spiritual rights, irrespective of sex and caste considerations, is advanced to meet the demand for equality in material rights.[79] Some writers believe in certain intrinsic virtues of the old Hindu theory and conception of human life and organization,[80] which they boldly recommend for adoption by the whole world. Prabhu's work (a text-book in several Indian universities), which emphasizes such virtues and justifies *varṇa* on fundamental principles of ethics and psychology, has been criticized by P. V. Kane, a person of moderate views,[81] as a disappointing work from the practical point of view. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar seems to have made a study of the social structure as known from the *Dharmaśāstras*, and specially from Manu, in order to present the *varṇa* system as a shield against all equalizing tendencies let loose by modern industrial society. He looks back with horror upon the idea of 'a classless, sexless(?), equalitarian society, a "secular democracy" sustained and guided by frequent plebiscites of the proletarians'.[82] He sets forth the purpose of his book on the social and political aspects of Manu in these words:

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[71] Ibid., p. 5.
[72] *Das Weib im altindischen Epos* (Leipzig, 1915), p. viii.
[73] Ibid.
[74] *Dharma and Society* (The Hague, London, 1935), p. 142.
[75] Ibid., p. 180.
[76] Ibid., p. 149.
[77] Ibid., Preface, p. xv.
[78] Ibid., p. 188.
[79] Chakladar, op. cit., pp. 203–4.
[80] P. H. Prabhu, *Hindu Social Institutions* (3rd ed., Bombay, 1958), p. 336; cf. p. 344; Chakladar, op. cit., iii, 170.
[81] Kane does not consider it feasible to destroy the whole edifice of the caste system in the near future. *History of the Dharmaśāstra* (Poona, 1930, etc.), ii, pt. 1, 22.

> 'If the Hindu scheme of life "has no other value except as exposing the unstable foundations of many modern social and political beliefs—such as the equality of the sexes, the equal rights of men, and of equal weight to everyone in society; of the value of only a materialistic view of life and life's problems; of the superiority of environment to heredity; of the exclusively material basis of social betterment; of the belief that the proper standard for remuneration is material productive capacity, etc. —it will have served its purpose".'[83]

It is difficult to pass judgement on the merits of such books. The dominant motives of reform have produced valuable works, but probably the object of defending the social status quo has not made any significant addition to our knowledge of the early history of India's social structure; such books are too deeply saturated with prejudices.

An important point for consideration is an inquiry into the nature of the forces which, according to all these writers, influence social developments in ancient India. This can be best illustrated by examining their conception of the causes of the origin and growth of caste. Racial and occupational factors have been ascribed to explain the origin of the castes, but this is also attributed to the 'essentially particularist instinct of the Indian people'.[84] It is suggested that the *brāhmaṇas* first extended the principle of exclusiveness to the *śūdras* and then to all the other *varṇas*, and that this led to the growth of the caste system.[85] The *ultimate basis* of the caste system has been traced to two doctrines:[86] (i) the doctrine of the religious unity of the family and (ii) the doctrine of the *svakarma* which lays on every man the obligation to do his duty in that state of life in which he has been born,[87] suggesting thereby that these doctrines arose first and the caste system came next. It is significant that a common reason assigned for the origin of the caste system both by European and Indian writers such as Fick, Sénart, Risley, Ghurye, etc., has been the Indian predilection for symmetry and their love for classification.[88] But they hardly indicate the premises from which they have drawn such an important deduction.

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[82] *Some Aspects of the Hindu view of Life according to the Dharmaśāstra* (Baroda, 1932), p. 11.

[83] *Aspects of the social and political system of Manusmṛti* (Lucknow, 1949), pp. 197–8.

[84] Risley, op. cit., p. 79.

[85] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1922), p. 350.

[86] Italics mine.

[87] Rapson, op. cit., i, 54.

[88] R. Fick, *Social Organisation in North-East India* (Calcutta, 1920), p. 282; Ghurye, op. cit., p. 159; Majumdar, op. cit., p. 385.

Risley enumerates the peculiarities of the Indian intellect which have promoted the growth of the caste system. These according to him are: 'its (i.e. the Indian intellect's)[89] lax hold of facts, its indifference to action, its absorption in dreams, its exaggerated reverence for tradition, its passion for endless division and sub-division, its acute sense of minute technical distinctions, its pedantic tendency to press a principle to its farthest logical conclusion and its remarkable capacity for imitating and adapting social ideas and usages of whatever origin'.[90] Risley thinks that a superstructure of fiction has specially contributed to the growth of the caste instinct,[91] for, in his opinion, fictions of various kinds have contributed largely to the development of early societies in all parts of the world.[92] Similarly discussing the decay of social organization in India an Indian writer ascribes this decline not so much to external opposition or to any inherent weakness in the ideal but to a falling off from the ideal itself.[93] Thus it would appear that ideas and ideals are represented as playing an important part in the origin, growth and decay of social organization.

Many writers believe that religious ideas have moulded the social history of India. Jolly holds that in India, as in other oriental countries, the law (*vyavahāra*) is an integral part of religion and ethics.[94] Winternitz points out that the structure of society is influenced through religious ideas, which are nowhere so deep in the life of the people, especially in the life of women, as in India.[95] This he derives from a general theory that the entire cultural development of mankind is shaped to an immense degree by religion.[96] In the case of India such a belief is also shown by Fick, who considers religious differences as an important cause of the origin of the caste. Indian writers also look upon religious injunctions as one of the reasons of the growth of the caste system. Thus there is a fundamental presupposition that ideas and ideals, in all their varieties, have played a vital part in shaping the course of social developments in ancient India. This discussion can be closed with the statement of an eminent scholar of ancient Indian civilization that the harmony of the three pursuits of life was the ideal which formed the background of social life in ancient India.[97]

As against the idealist conception applied to the study of ancient Indian social structure, in recent times its study has been taken up by some writers who seem to have been influenced by the materialist conception of history.

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[89] Bracketed portion mine.

[90] Risley, op. cit., pp. 275–6.

[91] Ibid., p. 273.

[92] Ibid., p. 275.

[93] Chakladar, op. cit., p. 208.

[94] *Hindu Law and Custom*, p. 1.

[95] *Die Frau im Brahmanismus* (Leipzig, 1920), p. 2; cf. p. 121.

[96] '. . . die ganze Kulturentwickelung der Menschheit in ungeheuren Masse von der Religion beeinflusst worden ist.' Ibid., p. 1.

[97] R. C. Majumdar, *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 581.

A. N. Bose,[98] S. A. Dange,[99] B. N. Dutt,[100] G. F. Ilyin,[101] D. D. Kosambi,[102] and Walter Ruben[103] may be placed in this group. In spite of their sharing a common outlook these writers not only differ on the dating of literary sources, such as the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the *Jātakas*, but they also differ fundamentally on several questions. While some hold that ancient Indian society was a 'slave society', others argue that this is not true in the same sense as in the case of other ancient societies. Again, while some argue that *varṇa* corresponds to the Marxian conception of ceonomic class, others think that economic considerations cut across the hereditary social *varṇas*. But, excepting some articles by Kosambi, so far very little attention has been paid to the mode of production in ancient India, which, in the materialist view, determines the relations of production, economic, social, and political. Although some works by these writers appeared sufficiently early, it is significant that none has been mentioned in the bibliographies appended to the volumes on *The History and Culture of the Indian People* published by the Bhāritīya Vidyā Bhavan. It may be too much to assert that historical materialism can provide the only scientific approach to the investigation of the ancient Indian social structure, but its possibilities are still to be explored, and hence in any future study of ancient Indian society such a line of inquiry cannot be altogether ignored.

[98] *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1942–5).

[99] *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery* (Bombay, 1949). The book shows more enthusiasm than scholarship, but it has run into a third edition in a short time and has been translated into several languages.

[100] *Studies in Indian Social Polity* (Calcutta, 1944).

[101] 'Śūdras und Sklaven in den altindischen Gesetzbüchern' in *Sowjetwissenschaft*, 1952, No. 2, tr. from *Vestnik drevnei istorii*, 1950, No. 2, pp. 94–107; 'Osobennosti Rabstva v drevnei Indii', *Vestnik drevnei istorii*, 1951, No. 1, pp. 33–52.

[102] Articles during the last ten years in *Journal of the Bombay Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* and *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.

[103] *Einfuhrung in die Indienkunde* (Berlin, 1954).

(B) *India in the Period of Muslim Rule*

10. SOME STUDIES IN PRE-MUGHAL MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY

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A paradoxical consequence of the study of the history of history in India is the reinforcement of the conventional nineteenth-century phasing of the sub-continent's past into the Hindu, the Muslim, and the British periods. Before 1947 some Indian historians had begun to question whether the G̲h̲orid Turkish invaders at the end of the twelfth century A.D. had introduced new ethnic strains, a new religion, a new form of polity, or new economic techniques. They did make possible, however, the introduction of historiography as a deliberate form of cultural expression with a conscious interest in what actually happened in the past, into Hindustan proper. As Professor Dodwell writes in his *India* (London, 1936), i, 22–23,

> 'The advent of Islam begins a great series of Indian chronicles . . . the Muslim chronicles are far superior to our own (English) medieval chronicles. They were written for the most part not by monks but by men of affairs, often by contemporaries who had seen and taken part in the events they recount . . . the Muslim period is one of vivid living men whereas the Hindu period is one of shadows.'

The material discussed in this paper includes the majority of the histories written before the Mug̲h̲al conquest by Muslims domiciled east of the Indus. It is not suggested that they form a coherent group in terms of theme, subject-matter, or technique. The period from the beginning of the thirteenth century to the middle of the fifteenth century A.D. may, however, be described as a colonial period in Indo-Muslim historiography—a period when Muslim historians remained aloof within the 'civil lines' of Muslim historical writing imitating the modes and manners of Arabic and Persian historians back at 'home' in their own records of the adventures among the 'natives' of their fellow Indian-Muslim political and military chiefs; they hoped that their histories would amuse, instruct, and refresh those chiefs when they returned from weeks and months of hard campaigning in the '*mufaṣṣil*'. For the historical works written in Persian in India between A.D. 1206 and A.D. 1440 all fall within categories of Muslim historical writing which had already appeared in Muslim civilization before the G̲h̲orid conquest. The four categories of which examples are found in India are as follows:

(*a*) the general history from the time of Adam; a sub-form is the history of the Muslim community in a particular region;

(*b*) the *manāqib* or *faẓā'il* type of prose eulogy, usually, but not necessarily, of a ruler;

(*c*) the *fürstenspiegel* didactic history;

(*d*) artistic forms of historical writing.

At the very beginning of the Turkish dominion in north India a work appeared which, so to speak, epitomized the state of Muslim historiography in the outside Muslim world at that time. This was the *S̲h̲ajara-i-ansāb-i-Mubārak S̲h̲āhī* by (probably) a native of Multan, Fak̲h̲r-i-Mudabbir Mubārak S̲h̲āh. This work will be discussed first.

A Microcosm of Early Twelfth-century Muslim Historiography—S̲h̲ajara-i-ansāb-i-Mubārak S̲h̲āhī

The author went to Lahore after the G̲h̲orid occupation in A.D. 1186 and completed there a volume of genealogical tables. He was presented to Quṭb al-dīn Aibak in 1206 about the time of the latter's assumption of power at Lahore after the death of Muḥammad ibn Sām of G̲h̲or. Quṭb al-dīn ordered the tables to be transcribed and bound for his library. The tables as now extant are prefaced by a lengthy introduction. This opens with praise of God and the prophets, a description of the cosmos and of the earth as divided into seven climes, of the fall of Iblīs, and of the superiority of man over the animal world. Then the importance of the mission of the Prophet, of the role of learned men and sultans is emphasized with the support of quotations from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīt̲h̲*. The necessity of doing justice, of distributing alms and of erecting public buildings for the people is stressed. Fak̲h̲r-i-Mudabbir then describes the troubled state of G̲h̲aznī when it was occupied by the G̲h̲uzz Turkomans before their expulsion by Muḥammad ibn Sām in A.D. 1173. He then records the career of Quṭb al-dīn Aibak and chronicles the G̲h̲orid victories in Hindustan from A.D. 1192 to A.D. 1206 and celebrates the conversion of infidels to Islam which, he says, followed them. Fak̲h̲r-i-Mudabbir recounts the murder of Muḥammad ibn Sām at Damyak and the subsequent assumption of authority by Quṭb al-dīn Aibak at Lahore. He praises the latter for abolishing unorthodox practices which have crept in during the time of previous rulers and for making generous provision for widows, orphans, and his Turkish followers. Then follows a remarkable statement, amounting almost to an explanation, of how the Turks have attained to their present eminence in the Muslim world together with a description—partly legendary—of the geography, population, customs and language of Turkestan. Fak̲h̲r-i-Mudabbir then instructs sultans in the merits of clemency, generosity, and courage, by means of appropriate anecdotes drawn from the lives of the rightly-guided caliphs. Quṭb al-dīn Aibak is praised for modelling himself upon them. The author then explains how he came to prepare the genealogical tables which form the main part of the work. The one hundred and thirty-seven genealogies relate to Adam and Eve and their descendants, the prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān, the G̲h̲assānids, pre-Islamic and Islamic poets, the pre-Islamic Persian kings, the Umayyads, the 'Abbāsids and their nobles and so down to the G̲h̲aznavids and G̲h̲orids.

The *S̲h̲ajara-i-ansāb* therefore contains something of every element of Muslim historiography as it existed at the beginning of the twelfth century A.D. in that area of the Muslim world where Persian was the dominant language of culture. That is, universal history in the form of genealogy, a chronology of military events, a eulogy of the reigning sultan, *fürstenspiegel* type maxims for pious rulers, and miscellaneous cosmological, geographical and ethnographical data. It is noteworthy that the critical approach of Arabic historiography to its sources, to be seen in al-Ṭabarī who rigorously employs the principles of *Ḥadīt̲h̲*-criticism, is totally absent.

The General History of the Muslim World

The *general* history had come to flower in the Islamic world between the ninth and eleventh centuries A.D. in, for example, al-Ya'qūbī's *Ta'rīk̲h̲*, in al-Dīnawarī's *Ak̲h̲bār al-Ṭiwāl* and al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīk̲h̲ al-Rasūl w'al-Mulūk* which was the general history which ended all original general histories for the period it covered.

The scope of these general histories embraced the history of pre-Islamic Arabia, Persia, and 'Rūm', the story of the patriarchs and prophets to the time of Muḥammad, the life of the Prophet and then the annals of the Umayyid and 'Abbāsid caliphs, arranged chronologically according to reigns in al-Ya'qūbī and al-Ṭabarī, but according to *ak̲h̲bār*, or groups of events in al-Dīnawarī. But however the events are arranged, they are always ascending to or descending from an historical peak—the life and mission of Muḥammad. Al-Ya'qūbī might include illustrations of Greek culture, geographical data on China, or legends on pre-Sāssānian Persia, but these are stage settings not the play itself; the play itself is the providential story of Islam which alone gives the whole décor meaning. Al-Ṭabarī in particular is imbued with the conception of the unity and continuity of the historical experience of the Muslim community or *umma*.

A feature of al-Ya'qūbī's, al-Dīnawarī's, and al-Ṭabarī's histories is their use of a wide range of evidence and their critical approach within the criteria of their time. For example, al-Ya'qūbī uses the earliest material for biblical history, quotes Greek work, rejects legendary pre-Sāssānian Persian data and incorporates information on the economies and administrations of the regions in which he has travelled. Al-Ṯabarī uses the critical methods of the Muslim traditionists giving *isnād*, or chains of transmitters for his reports, and setting down different testimony about the same events.

Two general histories of Islam and one general regional history of Islam in northern India were written in India during the period under review—the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* (A.D. 1259–60), by Minhāj al-Sirāj Jūzjānī, the *Ta'rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*, written between A.D. 1428 and 1434, by Yahya ibn Aḥmad Sarhindī, and the *Ta'rīkh-i-Muḥammadī*, completed A.D. 1438–1439, by Muḥammad Bihāmad Khānī.

The author of the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* was a migrant to India who held office as *qāẓī* under Sultan Naṣir al-dīn Qabācha of Sind and Sultan Iltutmish of Delhi and his successors. It is divided into twenty-three *tabaqāt* or collections of biographical notes and annals arranged in generations (*tabaqāt*) within a superimposed dynastic framework as follows: (i) Patriarchs and Prophets including the life of the Prophet, (ii) the first four caliphs and the descendants of 'Alī, (iii) the Umayyids, (iv) the 'Abbāsids, (v) the early Persian kings to the rise of Islam, (vi) the Tubbas and kings of the Yemen, (vii) the Tāhirids, (viii) the Safārids, (ix) the Sāmānids, (x) the Dailamīs, (xi) the Ghaznavids, (xii) the Saljūqs, (xiii) the Sanjarids, and the Atabegs of 'Irāq, Fars and Nishāpūr, (xiv) the *maliks* of Nīmrūz and Sīstān, (xv) the Kurdish *maliks* and the Ayyubids of Egypt, (xvi) the Khwarazm Shāhs, (xvii) the Shansabānī sultans of Ghōr, (xviii) the Shansabānī sultans of Bāmiyān and Tukhāristān, (xix) the Shansabānī sultans of Ghaznī, (xx) the Mu'izzī sultans of Hindustan, (xxi) the Shamsī sultans of Hind, (xxii) biographies of the Shamsī *maliks* in Hind, (xxiii) the recent disasters which have befallen Islam, notably the eruption of the Mongols.

The *Ta'rīkh-i-Muḥammadī* was written not by a member of the '*ulama* but by a member of the Muslim military *muqta'* class. The father of Muḥammad Bihāmad Khānī was *muqti'* of Irich north of Jhānsī under the 'sultan' of Kālpī, one of the splinter principalities hived off from the sultanate of Delhi after Tīmūr's invasion of A.D. 1398–9. Muḥammad Bihāmad Khānī states that he wrote his *Ta'rīkh* in praise of Muḥammad after experiencing a dream which his *ṣūfī pīr* interpreted as an assurance of salvation. The *Ta'rīkh-i-Muḥammadī* covers broadly the same ground as the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* but with the addition of the history of subsequent sultans of Delhi, of Tīmūr, of biographies of saints (chiefly those resident in Hindustan) and an account of the struggles of the 'sultans' of Kālpī with their Hindu and Muslim neighbours to the time when the author forsook an active military career for a life of study and meditation. The *Ta'rīkh-i-Muḥammadī* is arranged in the form of annals of the life of the Prophet and of the history of the early caliphs, that is a year by year succession of events, chiefly military. Thereafter the arrangement is by dynasty and reign with the emphasis again on military events or on appointments to office. The biographies of the saints are stereotyped eulogies couched in terms which render the name at the head of each almost irrelevant. It is to be noted that there is no change of idiom in the history when Muḥammad Bihāmad K͟hānī recounts events in which he himself participated.

Both Minhāj al-Sirāj Jūzjānī and Muḥammad Bihāmad K͟hānī treat history as a succession of events in which ruling and powerful members of the Muslim community—or their infidel enemies—are involved. That train of events commencing with the patriarchs and prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān appears to run on inexorably like an endless belt beyond the control of those caught up with it. As generation succeeds generation names, dates, and places are different but the character and quality of events appear to be the same whether they occur in the first, the third, the fifth, or the seventh century of the Muslim era. The story has the uniform flatness of a film negative.

Both Minhāj al-Sirāj Jūzjānī and Muḥammad Bihāmad K͟hānī were historians from authority and from authority more crudely conceived than by al-Ṭabarī or al-Ya'qūbī or al-Dīnawarī. Absent entirely is the *isnād* criticism of al-Ṭabarī or the rejection of legend by al-Dīnawarī. Minhāj āl-Sirāj Jūzjānī relies largely for example on the *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fi Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm* of al-Muqaddasī, the Persian abridgement of al-Ṭabarī by al-Bal'amī, the *Mag͟hāzī* by al-Wāqidī, and the *Ta'rīk͟h-i-Wilāyat-i-K͟hurāsān* by al-Sallamī, among other works no longer extant. No attempt is made to evaluate the reliability of the sources used; indeed Minhāj al-Sirāj Jūzjānī occasionally gives different dates for the same event in different contexts, suggesting that the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* is literally composed of strata upon strata of frozen narratives. The absence of the discipline of *Ḥadīt͟h* criticism is underlined by the presence of miraculous elements—dreams, visions and war missiles which do not obey the laws of gravity when aimed at the faithful.

Similarly Muḥammad Bihāmad K͟hānī paraphrases earlier histories without discussion or criticism. Among the sources he cites are the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī* itself, Ẓiyā' al-dīn Barnī's *Ta'rik͟h-i-Fīrūz S͟hāhī* and the biography of saints, the *Tazkirat al-Auliyā* by Farid al-dīn al-'Aṯṯār.

Although these two general histories betray that decline in the critical standards of Muslim historiography which appears to have occurred in the eastern Muslim world with the upthrust of Persian culture, yet they do not go the lengths of the *fürstenspiegel* literature in imagining history to be merely a branch of ethics in which liberties may be taken with historical facts for moral reasons. It is true that their authors abase the infidel, call down the wrath of heaven upon vice or remind their readers of the snares and delusions of worldly success; they do not however arrange their narratives to point morals, they point their morals to adorn their narratives.

A derived form of the general history of the Muslim world was the regional chronicle arranged under dynasties. The *Zain al-Akẖbār* by Gardīzī, relating chiefly to Ḵẖorāsān, is an example from the period before the G̱horid conquest of India. The only example of this type of historiography in India in the period under discussion is the *Ta'rīkẖ-i-Mubārak S̱ẖāhī* by Yahyā ibn Aḥmad Sarhindī written between A.D. 1428 and 1434. The author appears to have been a courtier of the Sayyid rulers of Delhi; he states that the *Ta'rīkẖ-i-Mubārak S̱ẖāhī* was written as an offering to the sultan after whom it is named, apparently in expectation of largesse.

The work is a chronicle compiled according to reigns and in fairly strict chronological order, of the deeds of Muslim rulers and nobles within the purlieu of north India, commencing with Muḥammad ibn Sām. It includes data about royal accessions, appointments to office, military expeditions against the Hindus, and revolts. It is avowedly composed from earlier histories, among them the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, Barnī's *Ta'rīkẖ-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*, and Amīr Ḵẖusrau's *Qirān us-Sa'adain.* Yahyā ibn Aḥmad does not however merely copy these works, he utilizes them in the manner of the *Ta'rīkẖ-i-Muḥammadī* to record a sequence of action. The compilation relies exclusively upon 'authority', the testimony of eye-witnesses, and oral tradition, employing no critical technique; often the author has recourse to the formula 'God alone knows the truth'.

The *Ta'rīkẖ-i-Mubārak S̱ẖāhī* does not explain why things happened in history beyond adducing the conventional—but not necessarily insincere—dogma of divine decree. It contains morals in prose and verse warning mankind against the snares and delusions of worldly success, but the narrative is not constructed in order merely to point this moral. The author appears very casual in his view of the past; he seems to value historical composition chiefly as a means of winning favour.

The Manāqib *or* Faẓā'il *History*

This type of Muslim historiography consists of highly stylized prose eulogy, usually of a ruler, noble, learned man, or saint, in accordance with orthodox religious and ethical standards. An example in Arabic is the *Ta'rīkẖ-i-Yamīnī* by Al-'Utbī in praise of Maḥmūd of G̱ẖaznī written about A.D. 1020–1. Two works of this type written in India in the fourteenth century are extant; the *Sīrat-i-Fīrūz S̱ẖāhī* by an unknown author, and the so-called *Ta'rīkẖ-i-Fīrūz S̱ẖāhī* by S̱ẖams al-dīn Sirāj 'Afīf. The *Sīrat-i-Fīrūz S̱ẖāhī* composed in A.D. 1370 at the behest of Sultan Fīrūz S̱ẖāh Tug̱ẖluq is divided into four sections, the first retailing the events from Fīrūz S̱ẖāh's accession in A.D. 1351 until his expedition to Thatta; the second, an eulogy of his acts of justice, charity, and virtue; the third, an account of his building activities; the fourth contains data on astronomy, the observatories built by the sultan, and contemporary instruments of war.

'Afīf's *Ta'rīk̲h̲-i-Fīrūz S̲h̲āhī* was written not long after Tīmūr's capture of Delhi in A.D. 1398–9. The author, who describes himself as an old man, was a courtier under Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲luq. There is no evidence in the work itself that 'Afīf wrote either at the behest of some powerful man or in hope of reward, but unfortunately the *Ta'rīk̲h̲-i-Fīrūz S̲h̲āhī* is the only survivor of a number of other works praising sultans 'Ala al-dīn Khaljī, Ghiyāt̲h̲ al-dīn Tug̲h̲luq, Muḥammad ibn Tug̲h̲luq, and Muḥammad ibn Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲luq, and although self-contained, does not express the author's motives as perhaps a possible general introduction to the whole collection of *manāqib* may have done. It is a possible hypothesis that 'Afīf intended to portray a golden age of the sultanate of Delhi before the calamity of Tīmūr's invasion.

The work opens with praise of God and the Prophet and states that God has created two worlds, this world and the next, and has given lordship of them to Muḥammad. But the Prophet, like a true *ṣūfī*, seeks only the insubstantial world and has delegated his authority to two groups of men, the *'ulamā* and *ṣūfī* mystics on the one hand and God-fearing sultans on the other; the latters' task is to enforce obedience to the *'ulamā* and the *mas̲h̲ā'ik̲h̲*. 'Afīf sets down ten moral stations (*maqāmāt*) which should guide the conduct of such sultans. These include the cultivation of such virtues and talents as compassion, justice, perspicuity, and alertness in the service of true religion. 'Afīf then proceeds to give an account of the reign in general chronological sequence in which no matter what Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲lūq does he is acting according to one or other of these moral and religious principles. Sometimes, for example, his pomp and majesty demand that he fight against fellow Muslims, sometimes his innate regard for true religion bids him not. His generosity towards his servants, his care for the people, his respect for the *ṣūfīs*, and his activities as a builder, are eulogized in florid prose. 'Afīf's sources are in general 'reliable reporters' or 'honourable narrators'.

Both the author of the *Sīrat-i-Fīrūz S̲h̲āhī* and 'Afīf treat the history of Fīrūz S̲h̲āh's reign as the spectacle of an ideal man witnessing to his ideal character; events are like plasticine in the hands of a moral and religious paragon, yet neither work is truly biographical for neither attempts to depict Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲luq as an individual personality. The sultan is a tailor's dummy garbed in ideal attributes—an exhibition figure for the edification of the pious. History is the story of what must have happened when an ideal ruler presided over the Delhi sultanate. Historiography is a form of pious panegyric.

It is curious that Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲luq should have been the object of eulogy, for whatever motive, of three historians, for, as will be seen below, he is portrayed as an ideal sultan by Ẓiyā' al-dīn Barnī also. It may be that he was patron of the *Sunnī 'ulamā* and a 'lay' disciple of the *C̲h̲is̲h̲tī* mystics from whose circles all three historians were drawn.

The fürstenspiegel *Didactic History*

Ẓiyā' al-dīn Barnī's *Ta'rīk̲h̲-i-Fīrūz S̲h̲āhī*, completed in A.D. 1357, the one history of the *fürstenspiegel* variety written in India during this period, is perhaps the most interesting as it is certainly the most vigorous *ta'rīk̲h̲* of them all. The author was related to prominent officials of the sultans of Delhi and had himself been a boon companion (*nadīm*) of Sultan Muḥammad ibn Tug̲h̲luq for more than seventeen years. He had fallen from favour with the accession of Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲luq and doubtless in dedicating his history to that ruler Barnī hoped to reap an appropriate reward, but he was seventy-four and the hope of reward in heaven was probably stronger. For Barnī had a philosophy of history which was a religious philosophy of history and a religious philosophy of history which informed the whole of the *Ta'rīk̲h̲-i-Fīrūz S̲h̲āhī*. Together with Qur'ānic commentary, Muslim jurisprudence and the mystic path, history was an essential component of divine truth; it was truth teaching by awful example, a sustainer of men in adversity, a prop to the judgement. But true history, that is, history which teaches the right morals, can only, said Barnī, be written by orthodox *Sunnī* traditionists.

Barnī wrote the *Ta'rīk̲h̲-i-Fīrūz S̲h̲āhī* to propagate his own philosophy of history and to educate the sultan in his duty. Barnī believed that the sultanate was un-Islamic, for the sultan was not the duly elected and qualified successor of the Prophet as the head of the Muslim community on earth, but only a military adventurer enjoying his position through force, use, and wont. However, thought Barnī, the sultanate could be made to serve the interests of Islam if only sultans would enforce the Holy Law, abase the infidel, patronize orthodox scholars, appoint only god-fearing officials, and humble themselves before God. A full exposition of the duties of a truly Muslim sultan, according to Barnī, is to be found in his *Fatāwa-i-Jahāndārī*. The *Ta'rīk̲h̲-i-Fīrūz S̲h̲āhī* illustrates from history the necessity of fulfilling those duties. It covers the reigns of the Delhi sultans, Balban, Mu'izz al-dīn Kaiqubād, Jalāl al-dīn K̲h̲aljī, 'Alā' al-dīn K̲h̲aljī, Quṭb al-dīn Mubārak S̲h̲āh Khaljī, Giyat̲h̲ al-dīn Tug̲h̲luq, Muḥammad ibn Tug̲h̲luq and the first six years of Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲luq. Each reign is treated as a moral melodrama in which the sultan enjoys success or suffers calamity in proportion to his obedience to Barnī's dogmas. Thus, for example, Balban keeps the Mongols at bay and subdues revolt by reason of his excellent appointments of god-fearing persons. But since he is too violent towards Muslims and tolerates infidelity in his kingdom, he loses his favourite son Muḥammad in battle against the

Mongols and the sultanate passes from his family after his death. Muḥammad ibn Tug͟hluq confronts a sea of troubles because he patronizes 'unorthodox' scholars—in particular those who employ Greek dialectic—and sheds the blood of true Muslims. Fīrūz S͟hāh Tug͟hluq on the other hand is presented as a paragon of virtue who enjoys unbroken success.

The *fürstenspiegel* traditions of Persian historiography are very strong in Barnī's *Ta'rīk͟h*; the *nadīm* was expected at Muslim courts to be a raconteur of improving anecdotes for the instruction and amusement of the ruler. In all his works Barnī betrays his 'profession' as *nadīm*. In the *Ta'rīk͟h-i-Fīrūz S͟hāhī* Barnī's sultans or their ministers are repeatedly made to utter Barnī's teachings. Fact was subordinated to effect. As each reign is presented as a one-act morality play, Barnī disregards detailed chronology and is sparing with his dates. God's will as Barnī understands it is always in evidence; Barnī finds the ultimate explanation of the course of history outside the course of history—for example, the worldly success enjoyed by 'Alā' al-dīn K͟haljī is attributed to the presence near Delhi of S͟haik͟h Niẓām al-dīn Auliyā.

Although the careers of his sultans dominate the scene, Barnī does include data relating to administration, land revenue collection, and economic life, but strictly as a stage setting for the main theme. He also includes lists of the luminaries in all spheres of Muslim culture who during each reign adorn the Delhi sultanate. As his sources, Barnī quotes the testimony of relatives or of other orthodox god-fearing persons or his own experience.

It would be interesting to know if there were works strictly comparable to the *Ta'rīk͟h-i-Fīrūz S͟hāhī* in the Muslim world outside India. Elements of similarity may be found perhaps in al-Ṭiqṭaqā's *al-Fak͟hrī* or Muḥammad ibn Tulun's *al-Luma'āt*.

Artistic Forms of Historic Writing

The use of poetry and rhymed prose in Muslim historiography dates from the tenth century A.D. when it became a stylistic device in panegyrics written by officials about their masters. Ibrahīm ibn Hilāl's encomium of the Buyids, Imād al-Isfahānī's history of the Seljuqs are examples.

Three Indian Muslim authors use rhymed prose or verse to celebrate historical events in India during the period under review, namely, Ḥasan Niẓāmī in the *Tāj al-Ma'at͟hir*, Amīr K͟husrau in five poems and one prose work, and 'Iṣāmī in the *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*.

Ḥasan Niẓāmī was a migrant first to G͟haznī and then to Delhi from his native Nis͟hāpūr. He wrote the *Tāj al-Ma'at͟hir* after encouragement from the *ṣadr* at Delhi, S͟haraf al-Mulk, and in response to a royal desire for an account of the glorious deeds of the G͟horid conquerors. Begun in A.D. 1206, the work continues in most copies to A.D. 1217, but Sir Henry

Elliott knew of a manuscript in which the work was carried down to A.D. 1228.

The *Tāj al-Ma'at͟hir* records a minimum of events with a maximum of florid description, hyperbole, amphibology, homonym, inversion, antithesis, simile, and rhetorical figure drawn from, for example, astrology, medicine, chess, biology, and botany. Every army is as numerous as the stars, every soldier as bloodthirsty as Mars, who carries a lance like a meteor, a sword like lightning, a dagger like a thunderbolt, and a shield like the moon. Melody and rhyme, art and artifice, are preferred to economy and precision in statement. Ḥasan Niẕāmī's heroes are always brave, victorious, perspicacious, generous, and cultured.

The historical poems and the rhymed prose of Amīr K͟husrau, the famous Indo-Persian poet (A.D. 1253–1325) are broadly similar in character and idiom to the *Tāj al-Ma'at͟hir*. The author was in effect the court poet at Delhi from A.D. 1289 to his death. As such his talents were always available to his royal patrons for the celebration of their victories and the life of their courts. His poems with an historical content include the *Qirān al-Sa'dain* (A.D. 1289), a *mat͟hnawī*, interspersed with *g͟hazals*, on the meeting of Sultan Mu'izz al-dīn Kaiqubād and his father Bug͟hrā K͟hān in Oudh; the *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ* (A.D. 1291), a *mat͟hnawī* on four victories of Sultan Jalāl al-dīn K͟haljī; the *Duwal Rānī K͟hiẓr K͟hān* (A.D. 1316, later continued to A.D. 1320), a *mat͟hnawī* on the love story of K͟hiẓr K͟hān, son of 'Alā' al-dīn K͟haljī, and Duwal Rānī, daughter of Rājā Karṇ of Nahrwala; the *Nuh Sipihr* (*c.* A.D. 1318), a panegyric in *mat͟hnawī* form of the deeds, court, peoples, languages, and the flora and fauna of Hindustan; the *Tug͟hluq Nāma* (after A.D. 1320) on the victory of G͟hiyāt͟h al-dīn Tug͟hluq over K͟husrau K͟hān in A.D. 1320. The prose panegyric, the *K͟hazā'in al-Futūḥ* (*c.* A.D. 1311), praises the deeds of Sultan 'Alā' al-dīn K͟haljī and his armies.

The past for Amīr K͟husrau was a spectacle of the great deeds of his patrons, actual or potential; a pageant wherein those who are the embodiment of virtue, genius, and true Muslim belief always overcome those who are not so.

The third Indo-Muslim poet, 'Iṣāmī, who wrote his *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* in A.D. 1349–50, aspired to be a second Firdausī. His *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, running to nearly twelve thousand verses in the extant versions, was intended to be the *Shāh Nāma* of Hindustan. The author migrated, apparently under protest, from Delhi to Daulatābād during the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tug͟hluq. Eventually he found a patron in Sultan 'Alā' al-dīn Bahman Shāh, founder of the independent Bahmanī Deccan sultanate.

The *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn* treats the past as a succession of exciting episodes in which Muslim heroes, chiefly sultans of Delhi, demonstrate their qualities. It is noteworthy that the work begins with Maḥmūd of G͟haznī and eulogizes particularly 'Alā' al-dīn K͟haljī as a great conqueror of Hindu princes. Episodes are interspersed with anecdotes and with moralizing on the dangers of worldly vanity. Divine intervention is frequent but capricious. The *Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn*, written for the Bahmanī sultan, is not unnaturally hostile to his former overlord, Muḥammad ibn Tug͟hluq, but 'Iṣāmī does not arrange his material to teach virtue although the reader is left in no doubt that 'Iṣāmī is in general in favour of virtue and opposed to vice. 'Iṣāmī's sources, he says, are oral tradition—anecdotes, legends and common report current among his friends and associates.

Since Ḥasan Niẓāmī, Amīr K͟husrau, and 'Iṣāmī subordinate history to art and treat the past as raw material for the poetic imagination, showing indeed great disinclination for facts and every inclination for fantasy, it is perhaps arguable whether their works should be classed as part of Indo-Muslim historiography, important as they may be as historical evidence.

General Remarks

Muslim historiography in India within the period discussed is not an independent intellectual discipline but occupies an essentially subordinate role in Muslim intellectual life. Following Fak͟hr al-dīn al-Rāzī in his *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm* or the Spaniard Ibn Ḥazm in his *Marātib al-'Ulūm*, Barnī places history after the religious sciences, as their servant. He regards it as one of the auxiliaries to the study of *Ḥadīt͟h*. Although history was deemed in Muslim India, as elsewhere, to be an essential part of polite education for princes, the study of history does not appear to have figured in the curriculum in mosque schools and colleges. It ranked as among a knowledge of *belles lettres*, poetry, and rhetoric as essential to the equipment of the *honnête homme*.

The methods of Muslim historiography in India underline its status as matrix rather than die in Muslim cultural life. Its methods are analogous to those of *Ḥadīt͟h*-study. History is what reliable reporters have stated. History is written from 'authority'. History is the repetition of what someone, somewhere, already knows rather than a discovery of something hitherto unknown but existing hidden in evidence. The historian is a scribe rather than a researcher, his work one of transmission rather than creation. He may embellish his material, even chop and cut it about; he does not transmute it in his own mind or 'put it to the question'.[1] It should be noted, moreover, that in India as elsewhere in the Muslim world after al-Ṭabarī, the historian provides no criteria of reliability of his sources independent of his own preference and decision. Absent are the painstaking efforts to trace *isnād* or to set down the several different extant accounts of the same event.

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[1] It is doubtful whether even Barnī consciously and deliberately transmuted his material in his mind.

The aim of Indo-Muslim historiography is in this period to present the past as a succession of deeds, events and episodes involving the great and powerful of the Muslim community. Barnī emphasized that history should not be about the 'base and lowly', otherwise it would lose its moral effect. Of course, both he and other Indo-Muslim historians were but mirroring the general movement of Muslim politico-religious life in their time in making the deeds of sultans, officials, and *ṣūfī* saints the main subject-matter of their work—and Muslim historiography, it has been suggested, was a follower rather than an arbiter of cultural fashions. Moreover, hopes of royal patronage influence some historians' interests, but it should be pointed out that neither 'Afīf nor Muḥammad Bihāmad K͟hānī appears to have been governed by these considerations, although they too concentrated on the deeds of great men.

Indo-Muslim historians saw the past in individual terms. History is biographical in form even though it may omit individual personality and reduce its figures to ideal stereotypes. Even the *umma* was not conceived as an organic subject for historical study. Human society appears as a concourse of atoms, together but not related, colliding but not interacting. Even when God is held ultimately responsible for what happens in history, He is seen as working through individuals, not through classes, 'social forces', or the 'spirit of the age'.

With the possible exception of Ẓiyā' al-dīn Barnī, Indo-Muslim historiography in the pre-Mug͟hal period views the past as a succession of 'time instants' or of untouching moments rather than as a story of change, of process, of becoming. The present follows the past, it is not the outcome of the past. It is probable that the concepts of 'As͟harite theology as formulated by al-Bāqillānī (*d.* A.D. 1012) influences Muslim historians. For al-Bāqillānī there was no order of nature but a succession of divine acts sustaining the universe which is itself a totality of indestructible changeless atoms or monads kept in being and in juxtaposition solely by God's will. All change and action in the world are produced by their entering into existence and their dropping out of existence, not by any modification in themselves. God is responsible for their existence and their annihilation.

Consequently, Indo-Muslim historiography is in the last resort providential, overtly as in Barnī's *Ta'rīk͟h-i-Fīrūz S͟hāhī* or covertly as in the general history of Minhāj al-Sirāj or Muḥammad Bihāmad K͟hānī. Muslim historians view history as from a rearward railway observation car. They do not see where they are going nor do they presume to know, but looking back they see their journey as running on straight lines in one direction towards the present. They assume that the only significant history is of the *umma* and that in what the *umma* has done God's hand is to be seen. History is purposeful and directed, though by other than human hands. Thus, in the final analysis, Muslim historiography in early medieval India is theocratic rather than humanist.

Early medieval Muslim historiography in India has been discussed as a projection of Muslim historiography previous to the G̲h̲orid conquest of north India. It is prudent to end this paper with the question whether the forms of historical writing in India, in their timing and sequence, were influenced by the kinds of history being written in the contemporary Muslim world of Trans-Oxiana, Persia, and ʻIrāq. The author of this paper has not the knowledge to discuss this question but hopes that others may be able to throw light upon it.

11. THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY MUSLIM HISTORIANS IN SUFI WRITINGS

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Introduction

Though mysticism is common to all religions, few other religions have such a wealth and variety of works on mysticism as the followers of Islam have produced at different times and in different countries. This vast literature covers treatises on the doctrines and phraseology of *sufism*, biographies of the saints belonging to different *silsilahs*, letters on sufism and other spiritual matters, table-talks of the saints, compendiums of maxims, theories and doctrines of the *sufis*, metaphysical and ethical matters, cosmology and ethics. The *sufi* writings which deal with abstruse subjects or are mere commentaries on mystic doctrines and practices constitute in themselves an important source of information for the study of the intellectual and spiritual development of Muslim society. In the biographical works one finds three elements—elements of pure history, of pure fiction, and history and fiction blended together in order to present in the life of a saint or saints all virtues which one would like to be emulated, and condemning all vices which should be eschewed in order to live a full and virtuous life. Interpretation of the life or thought of a person is subordinated to moral tests so that most of the biographies by casting an aura of holiness over the subject reduce the work to a didactic and commemorative panegyric of a saint, written 'for the glory of God and Church rather than a realistic revelation of a human personality for the amusement of man'. In spite of these defects the biographies of the saints, collections of their letters and compendiums of their conversations or table-talks constitute a most useful source of information for the understanding of the spiritual and ethical standards of the times, the social and economic conditions of the society and the moods and tensions of the period which conditioned and motivated the life of the people. Further, a study of these records gives us the history of the Muslims in its Indian setting, the influence which the Hindu religion and civilization exerted on the inner transmutation of Islam, the hopes and fears of the Muslims in the midst of a dynamic though subservient majority and the silent infiltration of Hindu customs, manners, and ways of thought into Muslim society.

Muslim *sufis* came into India in the wake of Muslim armies. By the beginning of the thirteenth century Muslim rule in northern India had been established, and in spite of the weak and apparently untenable position of the Sultans, several social and military factors helped to stabilize their position in India, which was not a conquered colony but an adopted home for them. Very soon there was a large number of converts to Islam from among the Indians, who accepted the faith of the conquerors as a result of either pressure or persuasion. It is among such people that the teachings of the *sufis* found a most fertile ground and a sympathetic hearing. How important is the study of the *sufi* movement in India, and a careful assessment of the work of the *sufis*, is thus stated by Professor Gibb:

> 'Pre-eminent among these problems relating to the life of the Muslim community in all regions since the twelfth century is the activity and influence of the sufi shaikhs and orders. It was into the sufi movement that the life-blood of the community flowed ever more strongly. No adequate history of Islam can be written until it, with all its causes and effects, has been studied patiently and with scholarly integrity. In no region, moreover, is this study more fundamental or more urgently required than in that of Islam in India. Islam came into India in the wake of conquering armies and found itself confronted by a culture and civilization with which it had in the first centuries no point of contact and no common ground except in the one field of the mystical search. Here the significance of Sufism in the life of the Muslim community was redoubled by its significance in the non-Muslim environment. Less even than Islam elsewhere can Islam in India be studied and understood without an insight into the meaning, causes and effects of the sufi movement.'

Mystic Principles

In considering this branch of literature we must first of all discard mystic works, which whether printed or in manuscript, can be proved to be pure fabrication and were certainly not written by the eminent mystics to whom they are attributed. To a visitor who told Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din (1238–1325) that he had read in Oudh a book written by the Shaikh, the latter replied: 'I have written no book and no Shaikh of my *silsilah* has written any book.'[1] Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din (*d.* 1356) also condemned the *Dalil-u'l-'Arifin*, which is attributed to Shaikh Qutb-u'd-din Bakhtiyra (*d.* 1235), as a pure fabrication.[2] Nevertheless, such books, both on mystic theory and the lives of the saints, kept on appearing during the Middle Ages. Some were written as an atonement for a life otherwise devoted to worldly affairs and others to win praise or profit in a credulous society which read such books with avidity. There was obviously a public demand for them, and religious reverence for the saints concerned induced posterity to preserve them with care.[3] Discriminating writers of later days, like Shaikh Abdul Haqq (1551–1642), have not utilized such literature, and one has to be cautious before admitting the genuineness of books written during this period.

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[1] *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, p. 45.

[2] *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, p. 52.

The genuine mystic literature of medieval India may be divided into two groups—books on mystic principles and books on the lives of the *shaikhs*.

The first important book on mystic principles that appeared in India was the *Kashful Mahjub* of Shaikh Ali Hajweri, who lies buried at Lahore. This work is too well known to require comment. The author says that he migrated from Ghaznin to Lahore owing to 'unpleasant people' which is probably a reference to the Ghuzz Turks.

When Muslim culture was consolidated in northern India after the Ghorian invasion, two great mystic teachers held the field—Shaikh Mohi-u'd-din Ibn-i-Arabi and Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi. Partly owing to the fact that the Suhrawardi order had pervaded Sind, Panjab, and northern India, while Ibn-i-Arabi left no *silsilah* behind him, and partly because Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din's view was considered to be less incompatible with the orthodox *Shari'at*, the *Awariful Ma'arif* of Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din became the acknowledged text-book of all Indian mystics during the Sultanate period. Shaikh Farid Ganj Shakar of Ajodhan used to teach it to his disciples, and the *Siyar-u'l-Auliya* gives the text of the certificate Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya obtained from him. This certificate (among other things) authorizes Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din to teach those facts of the *Awarif* which he had studied with his master. Generally speaking, medieval Muslim thought in India repeats and confirms the principles of the *Awarif*.

The Chishti Shaikhs, whose influence was predominant in northern India, wrote no books. Their main attempt was to live the mystic life according to certain approved standards and not to write about them. This rule does not apply to correspondence. In any case, Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Sawali, a disciple of Shaikh Moin-u'd-din Ajmeri, wrote a series of letters to Shaikh Baha-u'd-din Zakariyya, the founder of the Suhrawardi *silsilah*, in India. He objected to Shaikh Zakariyya's way of life and in particular to his amassing of wealth. Copies of all these letters, probably compiled into a book, were in the hands of Amir Khwurd, the author of the *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*. But only the paragraphs quoted by him (and re-quoted by Shaikh Abdul Haqq in his *Akhbar-u'l-Akhyar*) have survived. Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din lived a life of ascetic contentment by cultivating fallow land and is said to have refused the offer of a land-grant by the

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[3] For a detailed examination of some of these fabricated books, which have been printed, see Habib, *Medieval India Quarterly*, vol. I, no. 2, Oct. 1950, pp. 1–42.

Emperor Shams-u'd-din Iltutmish. His attitude towards the wealth-collecting Suhrawardi Shaikh was fairly acrimonious.

Since the Chishtis refused to take to writing, the Suhrawardis supplied the literature on mystic principles. The most important of these writers was beyond doubt Shaikh Hamid Nagori. Shaikh Hamid was *qazi* of Nagor for a year; then he decided that earning a livelihood as a *qazi* was illegitimate, resigned his post and went for further studies to Baghdad, where he is said to have become a disciple of Shaikh Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi. On returning to India he lived a life more on the pattern of the Chishtis than the Suhrawardis. He enrolled very few disciples. He loved to listen to mystic songs. Shaikh Qutb-u'd-din Bakhtiyar Kaki was an intimate friend of his and Shaikh Farid of Ajodhan carefully preserved his letters. His writings were regarded by contemporaries as 'marvellous', and inimitable. Shaikh Jamal-u'd-din in his *Siyal-u'l-Arifin* quotes the case of a mystic who came to meet Shaikh Hamid Nagori, and found on arrival at Delhi that the great mystic writer had died in the meantime. He consoled himself by going through Shaikh Hamid Nagori's works, which had been collected together in four volumes. After going through Shaikh Hamid's works, he remarked: 'What I and you know is here, and what I and you do not know is also here.' The manuscripts of Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Nagori's works are difficult to find. The authorship of two books —*Lawaih* (Tablets) and *Lawamih* (Illuminations)—have been definitely attributed to Hamid Nagori and he must have written other books also. It was not to be expected that Hamid Nagori's works, which even trained mystics found it extremely difficult to understand, would be preserved by being copied generation after generation. Still, a careful search of all libraries will probably enable us to rescue a substantial part of Hamid Nagori's writings. Whatever survives deserves to be carefully edited and printed.

Shaikh Ibrahim Iraqi, a nephew of Shihab-u'd-din Suhrawardi, came and lived in the *Khanqah* of Shaikh Baha-u'd-din Zakariyya at Multan and married his daughter. Iraqi's *Diwan* is well known and there is an excellent manuscript of it in the Muslim University Library. But as tradition will have it, Ibrahim Iraqi's life was surrounded by scandals, and he preferred to leave India. Then either at Konia or Damascus, he wrote his *Lumaat*, under the influence of the traditions of the school of Ibn-i-Arabi.

If the works of Hamid Nagori lack in intelligibility, this charge cannot be brought against the most popular book on mystic principles produced during the Sultanate period—the *Maktubat* (Letters) of Shaikh Sharaf-u'd-din Yahya of Munir in Bihar. Not much is known about the author, who was a contemporary of Firoz Shah Tughlaq and belonged to the Firdausi *silsilah*, which, unable to find a firm footing in Delhi owing to its conflict with Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya, very wisely decided to move farther east. But Sharaf-u'd-din Yaḥya, according to a mystic tradition, came to pay his respects to Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din when a young man, and succeeded in obtaining his blessings. The *Maktubat* is a popular work prepared for the mystic intelligentsia. It is in the form of letters addressed to persons, whose names are given but who are otherwise of no moment. Every letter is devoted to a particular topic, such as belief in Divine unity, repentance, prayer, fasting, etc. The language is simple and the author makes himself as clear as the subject-matter permits. Manuscripts of the *Maktubat* are easy to find in India, but they differ in the number of letters they contain. Apparently from motives of economy, people who got the book copied selected the letters on their favourite topics and ignored the others. The *Maktubat* has been printed at Lucknow and Lahore, but the Lahore edition consists not of one but of two series of letters. Perhaps it would be fair to assume that Shaikh Sharaf-u'd-din when preparing the letters intended to compile them into a book, that the first volume was compiled by him in his lifetime and that the second volume was compiled by his disciples after his death.

While the *Maktubat* of the Shaikh of Munir is concerned with academic matters, the letters of Mujaddid Alf Sani cover a vast field ranging from technology and metaphysics to politics and missionary activities. These letters are a mirror of the intellectual and spiritual ferment which swept over the spiritually saturated Indian Muslim society when it would either turn into the path of orthodoxy or be swallowed up in the religious revivalist movement known as the Bhakti movement which was the answer of the Hindu society to the silent spread of Islam in India.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, popularly known as Imam-i-Rabbani and Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani (1563–1624), was an eminent saint of the Naqshbandi order in India. Throughout his life he remained in contact with the Mughal nobles and for many years was in close touch with Jahangir. His was a reform movement intended to purify the Muslim society and eradicate the influences of Akhbar's religious outlook and policy on Muslim society. One of the methods employed by the Mujaddid to achieve his object was to carry on correspondence with men of eminence throughout the country. He wrote innumerable letters to his disciples, friends, and acquaintances. His disciples included nobles and generals like Khan-i-Azam, Khan-i-Jahan, Khan-i-Khana, Mirza Dorah, Qulich Khan, Khwaja Jahan, and Nawab Murtaza Khan. There are three volumes of these letters. The first volume, known as *Dur-u'l-Ma'rifat*, compiled by Khwaja Yar Muhammad Badakshi, contains 313 letters; the second volume, known as *Kur-u'l-Khalayaq*, compiled by Khwaja Abdul Hai, contains 99 letters; and the third, known as *Mari'fat-u'l-Haqayiq*, compiled by Khwaja Mohammad Hashim, contains 124 letters.

Lives of Indo-Muslim Mystics

1. *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* of Amir Hasan Sijzi. On Sunday, Shaban 3, 707 A.H. (January, A.D. 1307) the poet Amir Hasan Sijzi confessed to Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya that he had begun compiling a record of the Shaikh's conversations. The Shaikh approved the idea and asked him to proceed with his work. Amir Hasan seems to have been employed in the civil department of the army and his residence was some distance from the Shaikh's *Jama'at Khana*. But after every visit to the Shaikh, Amir Hasan wrote down from memory what people had said to the Shaikh and what the Shaikh had said in reply. If his memory failed him or he had failed to understand the Shaikh, Amir Hasan left a blank space for the Shaikh to fill in. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din revised the pages as they were submitted to him by Amir Hasan and thus the book, *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, consisting of five volumes (covering some 250 pages of lithograph), was prepared. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din was particular that his views should be correctly represented and he presented all his *Khalifas* (successors) with an authorized copy of the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*. The book consequently survives to us in a form which places its genuineness beyond doubt. The last conversation is dated.

The *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* was immediately approved by the Indo-Muslim mystic world, which acknowledged Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din as its leading figure. Copies of the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* were preserved and read by the Shaikh's disciples as it reminded them of their master. According to a tradition recorded by Maulana Shibli, the poet Amir Khusrau said that he was prepared to exchange all his works for the authorship of the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*. It is certainly a very careful and faithful record of the great mystic's teachings. The *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* is divided according to dates, for no other division was possible. We find from other sources that the Shaikh's *Jama'at Khana* was constantly full of visitors who were taken to his room on the roof singly or in groups. The visiting hours were from sunrise to midday and again in the afternoon and evening. The Shaikh's conversations as recorded in the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* range over all kinds of topics. But it was not considered proper to refer to the ruling king in the *Khanqah* of a Chishti mystic, and the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* consequently makes no reference to the Emperor Ala-u'd-din Khilji and his officers. The duty of a Shaikh was to guide, to explain mystic principles, to lay down postulates for life. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din slept little at night, and his eyes were often red from sleeplessness. But he was an inspiring conversationalist and he had to discover the unspoken thoughts of men. Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din, among other things, often talked about his master, Shaikh Farid, and Shaikh Farid's master, Shaikh Qutb-u'd-din Bakhtiyar Kaki. There is no direct reference to Shaikh Moin-u'd-din Ajmeri, the founder of the Chishti *silsilah* (order) in India, though there are references at two places to his descendants. Anecdotes about all the mystics of importance, whether belonging to the Chishti *silsilah* or not, are scattered throughout the work. There are also references to scholars and preachers, who were religious men rather than mystics. The *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* attributes no miracles to Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din, and the Shaikh affirmed repeatedly that miracles were of no spiritual significance. In a story he relates about Shaikh Saif-u'd-din Bakharzi who put miracles on the same plane as magical tricks. Rabia Basri (*ob.* 185 A.H., A.D. 801) is reported to have once remarked, 'If you fly in the air, you are a fly; if you walk over the water, you are a straw, but if you win a heart you are something.'

Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din spoke about Indo-Muslim mystics on the basis of what he had himself seen or heard from reliable witnesses. The *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* is our first and basic authority for the Muslim mystics in India. In the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* pointed attention is drawn to the sharp conflict between the Ulama, or the jurists, and the mystics. One Nur Turk had incurred the evil eye of the Muslim theologians because of his bold denunciation of their worldliness and hypocrisy and the latter had retaliated by accusing him of having heretical views. The great Shaikh, however, with his liberal outlook speaks of Nur Turk as being 'purer than rain water'.

Incidentally, these conversations give us valuable information about the educational system of the time, the books that were most studied, the working of the different departments of State, weights and measures, and the general social and economic conditions of the time.

2. *Siyar-u'l-Aulyia* of Amir Khwurd. Syed Mubarak, a merchant of Kirman, who used to wander about with his goods between Persia, Multan, and Lahore, was so captivated by Shaikh Farid of Ajodhan that he decided to give up his profession and join the circle of starving mystics who had collected round the Shaikh. When Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya came to Shaikh Farid's *Jama'at Khana* with no change of clothes, Mubarak's wife washed his clothes for him and the latter never forgot this kind act. Mubarak's son, Muhammad, followed in his father's footsteps, but after Shaikh Farid's death, he and his wife attached themselves to Shaikh Nizam u'd-din Auliya at Delhi. Muhammad's son, Amir Khwurd, was made a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din, but he was too immature (he tells us) to gain anything substantial from the Shaikh's teaching. When the Emperor Muhammad bin Tughluq compelled several mystics to go to the Deccan, Amir Khwurd went there with many others, but when Sultan Muhammad's power in the Deccan was overthrown, Amir Khwurd returned to Delhi apparently in distress. He then decided to devote his time to writing a history of the Chishti *silsilah*, to which he gave the name of *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*.

Amir Khwurd had great qualifications for this task. Among the circles in which his father and grandfather moved, the Chishti mystics of the past were a favourite topic of conversation, and Amir Khwurd learnt a lot from his father and his father's friends. He was also in a position to contact the surviving members of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din's circle. 'I am tired of books,' Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din once said. Nevertheless he had an excellent library and one of his disciples was specially assigned the task of copying out books for the Shaikh. Add to it, Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya, who kept awake most of the night, was fond of writing down any thoughts that came to him. It is difficult to say how it happened, but Amir Khwurd certainly had access to all the papers of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya.

The *Siyar-u'l-Auliya* first gives the history of the Chishti Shaikhs from Hazrat Ali to Shaikh Usman Haruni. Their account is legendary, but was accepted by the orthodox believer as correct. Amir Khwurd could get no information about Shaikh Moin-u'd-din Ajmeri. He gives a paragraph about the Shaikh's death, but this paragraph is taken bodily from the *Dalil-u'l-Arifin,* a fabricated work attributed to Shaikh Qutb-u'd-din Bakhtiyar, and the *Dalil-u'l Arifin* has, in its turn, taken the account of the death of Shaikh Bayazid Bustami given in the *Tazkiratul Auliya* and merely substituted the name of Shaikh Moin-u'd-din for the name of Shaikh Bayazid. Of Shaikh Bakhtiyar also, Amir Khwurd knew little except what could be collected from the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* and some surviving legends. But from the time of Shaikh Farid, the *Siyar-u'l-Auliya* becomes a work of surpassing value. The life of Shaikh Farid is described in detail and an account is given of his family and *Khalifas*. Amir Khwurd was here depending upon his very reliable family lore, and the circle of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din had carefully treasured the memory of Shaikh Farid. Then follows a complete biography of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya from his birth at Badaun to his death at Delhi. The historical part then ends with two chapters, one devoted to the successors (*Khalifas*) of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din Auliya and the other to his selected disciples. The book ends finally with the teachings of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din but this part is largely based on the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad* of Amir Hasan. Amir Khwurd was also a poet and quotes his verses throughout his book in a manner that is somewhat irritating as it interferes needlessly with the continuity of the prose narrative. There is also in the *Siyar-u'l-Auliya* an element of miracle-mongering which Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din would have condemned. Manuscripts of the *Siyar-u'l-Auliya*, it appears, became more and more inaccurate with every succeeding generation.

Amir Khwurd speaks of the historian Zia-u'd-din as dead and Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh as living. He has the highest opinion of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din, 'In the majlis of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din,' he says, 'I have found once more the perfume of the majlis of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din

Auliya.' The *Siyar-u'l-Auliya* may have been written about the year A.D. 1357.

3. *Khair-u'l-Majalis* of Hamid Qalandar. About the year A.D. 1351 a scholar by the name of Hamid Qalandar came to the *Khanqah* of Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh and offered to render him the same service as Amir Hasan had rendered to Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din by preparing a record of his conversations. Hamid had been made a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din at the age of fourteen. The Shaikh gave him a piece of bread, but when out of the house, some *qalandars* took it away from him. When his father brought him back to the Shaikh, the latter remarked, 'Hamid, you will also be a *qalandar*.' So Hamid when he grew up donned saffron robes and shaved off his beard, which he declared to be 'an unbearable earthly burden'. Like many others, Hamid also went to the Deccan, where he attached himself to Shaikh Burhan-u'd-din Gharib, a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din, whom the Bahmani kings had accepted as their patron saint. Hamid began to prepare Shaikh Burhan-u'd-din's conversations (*malfuzat*), but the latter's death put an end to the enterprise, and Hamid returned to Delhi.

Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din in days gone by had been a close friend of Shaikh Burhan-u'd-din. He carefully read what Hamid had written and then gratefully accepted his services.

The work of Hamid Qalandar, the *Khair-u'l-Majalis*, is modelled on the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad*, to which both Hamid and Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din refer when necessary. But whereas Amir Hasan had given the exact date of every conversation, Hamid merely numbers his *majlises* and brings them to one hundred. As a recorder Hamid does not come up to Amir Hasan's standard. On the other hand, Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din was the chosen disciple of Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din and understood his master better than Amir Hasan. There was also another difference. Hamid was incapable of mystic discipline. He wrote poetry of a sort and enjoyed life. He refused to fast, especially in summer 'when the fire of hell is showered on Delhi'. On the only occasion when the Shaikh succeeded in inducing him to fast, Hamid fell down unconscious by the afternoon, and did not recover till late at night. Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din on the other hand was often broken in spirit. The empire had collapsed, there was poverty all round, and the general condition of the Muslim society was far from satisfactory. 'Whether people tell me of their unhappiness or not, an impression of it is left on my mind.' He wistfully thought of the prosperity of Ala-u'd-din's days, when every beggar had a quilt or two. He may have realized that mystics could no longer live independently on the state, and that a mysticism which was dependent upon the government of the day would cease to be mysticism. In any case he refused to appoint a successor. To his nephew, who had prepared a list of disciples worthy of consideration, he remarked, 'Baba, tell them to be content with lessening the burdens of their own lives.'

The *Khair-u'l-Majalis* does not repeat the *Fuwa'id-u'l-Fu'ad.* There are anecdotes, for example, concerning Shaikh Farid or Shaikh Jalal Tabrezi which are recorded in order to complete a half-told story. Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din had also a lot to say about Shaikh Nizam-u'd-din, whom he knew more intimately than Amir Hasan or Amir Khwurd. As a mystic thinker Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din strikes one as bold and logical.

Hamid Qalandar apparently outlived the Shaikh. At the end of the *Khair-u'l-Majalis* we find an account of the Shaikh's life from the ending of the conversations to his death, probably in A.D. 1357.

4. *Saroor-us-Sudur.* This is a collection of the sayings of Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Mahmud, the son and successor of Shaikh Hamid-u'd-din Sawali Nagauri, a distinguished disciple of Shaikh Moin-u'd-din Chishti of Ajmer. Unfortunately the name of the author is not clear from the text, but it is established that he was a son of Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Mahmud. The author says that he has compiled the conversations of his father, Shaikh and master Shaikh Farid-u'd-din Mahmud.

The conversations recorded in *Saroor-us-Sudur* cover the period before and after the exodus to Deogir as a result of the policy of Muhammad bin Tughluq. At least three significant features of this period are clearly revealed in this work.

When Muhammad bin Tughluq forced the saints to accept government services, great saints like Shaikh Nasir-u'd-din Chiragh, Shaikh Shams-u'd-din Yahya, and Shaikh Qutb-u'd-din Munawwar, resented this and refused to accept government posts, but the lesser among them succumbed either to the pressure of the Sultan or prospects of a comfortable government job. *Saroor-us-Sudur* contains a strong condemnation of such saints.

'At this time the Shaikhs (mystics) and theologians have resort to the kings, suffer humiliations but do not desist from this practice.'

During the Tughluq period there is a revival of interest in the study of *Fiqh.* Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq himself was keenly interested in it and had many jurists in his service. The Shaikh recommends *Quduri* to his disciples and asks them to consult it frequently.

The economic instability of the empire of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq finds an indirect mention in the book. There are frequent references to scarcity of corn and the duties of those in affluent circumstances to help the poor and the indigent. Black marketing is here condemned on religious grounds. The fact that these remarks are repeated in several places can only be explained in the context of the then prevailing economic crisis.

There are interesting sidelights on the character of some well-known personalities of the time. Qazi Minhaj-u'd din Siraj, the famous author of

Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, in spite of his orthodoxy was fond of *samah* or music parties. Balban is reported to have remarked, 'I have three Qazis; one of them fears me but does not fear God; the second fears God but does not fear me, and the third one fears neither God nor myself.' Minhaj was the Qazi referred to as fearing neither God nor the king.

The author claims that his father was good in Arabic, Persian, and Hindi, and quotes verses composed by him in each of the above languages.

There is no chronological order in these conversations, which lack the clarity and fullness of the conversations recorded by Amir Hasan or Hamid Qalandar.

5. *Jawami-u'l-Ulum* and *Siraj-u'l-Hidayah* of Bukhari. Sayyid Jalal-u'd-din Bukhari (A.D. 1307–86), popularly known as Makhdum-i-Jahanian, was an eminent saint of the Suhrawardi *silsilah*, though he received *khilafat* from the Chishti and other orders as well. He had travelled very widely and was therefore known as Jahangust—world trotter. In his *Malfuzat* he claims to have visited Khurasan, Iraq, Yamen, Medina, Tabriz, Kufa and Damascus.

Two collections of his conversations are interesting and informative. *Jawami-u'l-Ulum* was compiled by Abu Abdullah Ala-u'd-din Ali in 1380, and *Siraj-u'l-Hidayah* by the saint's son Makhdumzada Abdullah and transcribed by Ahmad Moin in 1385. These *Malfuzat* throw valuable light on Firuz Shah's relations with the saint. The *Siraj-u'l-Hidayah* contains useful information about some medieval sects. The views of the Ibahatis who were punished by Ala-u'd-din Khilji and Firuz Shah are thus explained. 'They say that Faith is verbal; practice is not essential. And God can be seen by bodily eyes in this world and that the faithful will not be tried on the day of judgement for sins and fornication.'

It has not been possible to include in this short paper numerous similar *sufi* writings. A careful study of the writings of the *sufis* and books written about them will open new fields of research into the social and economic life of the Indian Muslims and their contribution to Indian culture.

12. THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY BY MUSLIM HISTORIANS IN MUGHAL OFFICIAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

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Historical works produced in India from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries have received commendation from some European writers while others have condemned them as 'for the most part dull, prejudiced, ignorant and superficial'. Sir Henry Elliott (1808–53), to whom all students of medieval Indian history owe a debt of gratitude for having collected and preserved Persian histories of the middle ages and making them available to scholars in extracts in translation, however faulty, thus expressed his opinion on the value of the histories so laboriously collected by him and so unfortunately misused.

> 'If the artificial definition of Dionysius be correct,' says Sir Henry Elliott, 'that history is philosophy teaching by examples, then there is no native Indian historian; and few have even approached to so high standard. Of examples, and very bad ones, we have ample store though even in them the radical truth is obscured by the hereditary, official and sectarian prepossessions of the narrator; but of philosophy which deduces conclusions calculated to benefit us from the lesson and experiences of the past, which adverts on the springs and consequences of political transactions, and offers sage counsels for the future, we search in vain for any sign or symptom. Of domestic history also we have in our annalists absolutely nothing and the same may be remarked of nearly all Mohammadan historians, except Ibn Khaldun. By them society is never contemplated either in its conventional usages or recognised privileges; its constituent elements or mutual relations; its established classes or popular institutions; in its private recesses or habitual intercourses. In notices of commerce, agriculture, internal police and local judicature they are equally deficient. A fact, an anecdote, a speech, a remark which would illustrate the conditions of the common people, or of any rank subordinate to the highest, is considered too insignificant to be suffered to intrude upon a relation which concerns only grandees and ministers, "thrones and imperial powers". Hence it is that these works may be said to be deficient in some of the most essential requisites of History, for "its great object", says Dr. Arnold, "is that which most

> nearly touches the inner life of civilised man, namely, the vicissitudes of institutions, social, political and religious". In Indian Histories there is little that enables us to penetrate below the glittering surface and observe the practical operation of a despotic government and rigorous and sanguinary laws, and the effect upon the great body of the nation of these injurious influences and agencies . . . From them, nevertheless, we can gather, that the common people must have been plunged into the lowest depths of wretchedness and despondency.'

These are the views not of a scholar but of an administrator and an apologist for British rule in India. Elphinstone, whose *History of India* was for a long time used as a text-book by our University students in general and by the young civilians in particular, had unconcealed contempt for all Islamic institutions in general and the Prophet of Islam in particular. Other scholars whose knowledge of Islam and Islamic institutions and oriental ways of life and thought was deeper and more sympathetic, being less warped by either religious fanaticism or political partisanship, have expressed more favourable opinion about the value of these historical works.

> 'Many able men', says Major Nassau Lees, 'have occupied themselves with the history of India, and each and all of them have contributed in their degree to dispel the mists of ignorance which cloud the knowledge of even the best informed persons in England on this subject. The Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone has written perhaps the most generally approved history of India. Still how very incomplete it is, and how very incomplete is every history of India that has yet appeared! Yet the materials for a history of the Mohammadan period, if incomplete for the whole, exist in abundance for a great if not the greater part; and it does not reflect credit on the English name or nation that, having been the paramount power in India now for upwards of a century, and having been for upwards of half that period in complete possession of the greater portion of it, no efficient effort has been made to collect and consolidate these materials in such a manner as to make them available for the service of the future historian and for the instruction of the patient student, or of those who come to India to rule, to trade, to travel, or for any other purpose of business or pleasure. True it is, as just stated, that the materials for the compilation of a history of India for the six hundred years of Mohammadan dynasties are not so complete for all portions of the period as could be wished; indeed, for some they are very scant. True it is that the great mass of Mohammadan historical works partake more or less of the character of biographies, and are rather chronicles of the deeds of kings than of the events of the period, the institutions of the people, the progress of civilization, and the results of

policy and contemporaneous opinions regarding them, and are deficient in many of those characteristics which enable posterity to derive valuable lessons from the experiences of the past. More true still is it that most of the historians were for the most part court chroniclers who wrote to order, and whose business it was to employ their eloquent language to draw a veil over the vices of those whose virtues they were hired to extol. Still, I do not coincide in opinion with those who estimate as of little worth the large body of historical works which has been bequeathed to posterity by the many very able writers who flourished at intervals within the period above mentioned. Where are the historians from the ages of the Greeks and Romans down to our own time, to whose writings many and grave objections may not be taken? You might almost count them on fingers. In reading Oriental histories, moreover, all due allowance must be made for the influences of despotism, bigotry, love of flattery, and personal vanity, which is peculiarly characteristic of the men and the times of which they wrote; but though exaggeration may sometimes have been resorted to, a main peculiarity of Mohammadan writers—and which is of the essence of all sound history—is regard for truth. Nor are we altogether dependent upon court chroniclers; we have in some instances contemporary and independent historians; besides which, writers who have never failed to comment freely upon the histories of those authors who have preceded them, and their testimony in such cases may be considered impartial. Where, again, is the Emperor in modern times who would so truthfully and so frankly record his own follies and vices as the Emperor Jehangir had done in his memoirs or autobiography, commonly called the *Tuzak-i-Jehangiri*? Where is nowadays the empire in which an author could dare to write of his despot rulers in the unmeasured terms in which 'Abd al Kadir of Badaon has written of the Emperor Akbar? Where in the whole range of the literature of that period of the world history can we find a more valuable and complete compendium of the political, religious, social, commercial, and agricultural institutions of a nation than is contained in the Institutes of Akbar compiled by Abul Fazal? That much valuable information is to be acquired, and that many useful deductions may be drawn from the facts and events found recorded in the pages of the Mohammadan historians of India there can be little doubt.'

The study of the history of this period, A.D. 1206–1707, presents serious difficulties. Firstly, many important works to which the medieval Indian writer refers have been lost. Those that still survive the ravages of time and man are scattered in various libraries all over the world. The official records and documents have mostly perished and there is little or no hope of their recovery. Secondly, the coins, inscriptions, and official and private letters of this period have not been studied with the care that they deserve. Thirdly, all available evidence, literary, numismatic and epigraphic, is in a language with which the modern student of Indian history is not conversant. Added to it is the difficulty of reading and interpreting a foreign language in a language equally foreign to us. Our failure to have a history of the people of India written for the Indian people is thus due on one hand to the fact that all material which exists has not yet been made available and on the other to the difficulty of the language in which it exists. Finally, we have all along searched for a history of the culture, institutions, and religious movements of this period in works which were intended to be political histories only. We have failed to recognize the fact that the history of India is the history of her cultural and religious movements. In this respect our records are not deficient; our misfortune has been that we have not studied them with the care and industry which their intrinsic worth demands.

Foreign writers as well as Indians have complained of the absence of constitutional and institutional records of this period. This is due to an ignorance of the conditions of the Indian people—in fact of all people, during the Middle Ages. Politics as a separate social science was unknown. It was a sub-section of divinity or of law, and political theorists were theologians or legists. It is in the works of theology and ethics that we have to look for the material for the history of cultural, religious, and political institutions of India.

The people of medieval India found an escape from the injustices of the social system, the cruelty and hardships of a despotic government based on the violence of the violent, and the soul-destroying formulae of dogmatic theology, in popular mysticism of the time with its neighbourly warmth, its insistence on good works and good faith, and its simple straightforward approach to the problems of life and death. The teachings of the mystics never became revolutionary. They did not contribute to the discontent with the social and religious system but to a submissive fatalistic conciliation of the restless rebellious spirit to the hard and pitiless realities of life. The literature of this period is rich in books of mystic doctrines, of lives of the saints, of collections of their letters and of their conversations recorded by their disciples. Their *malfuzat* have preserved for us in a very attractive form the daily conversations of men who lived four or five hundred years ago about the daily affairs of life. No one who is acquainted with them will complain that we are unable to know about the life of the common people during the Middle Ages. Some of the most important of these books still await printing. Others have been printed but are difficult to find. The great mystics of Delhi and some of the provincial towns gave a wide berth to kings and their courtiers, but they did much to soften the rigours of materialistic rule. They brought light and warmth on one side and cohesion and unity on another to a society which was rapidly disintegrating. The Chishti saints became precursors of Kabir, Nanak, and Chaitanya.

Historical literature relating to the Mughul period of Indian history from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century may be divided into the following categories:

1. Official Histories;
2. Government Records;
3. Biographies and Memoirs;
4. Non-official Histories;
5. Local or Provincial Histories;
6. Munshaat or collections of letters;
7. Gazetteers and official manuals;
8. Literary works.

I propose to deal in this paper only with Mughul official histories and biographical works.

Official Histories

Amongst histories sponsored by kings and financed by the state, pride of place must go to *Akbar Namah* of Abul Fazal. Shaikh Abul Fazal, son of Shaikh Mubarak of Nagaur, was born at Agra on 14 January 1551. Mentally precocious, he completed his education before he was fifteen years of age and became a teacher before the age of twenty. He was presented to Akbar in 1573 by his elder brother Faizi, and soon rose to high position at the imperial court by his vast learning and assiduous devotion to his master. He distinguished himself as a writer, statesman, diplomat, and military commander. He was assassinated on 22 August 1602 at the instigation of Prince Salim.

Abul Fazal's reputation rests, besides numerous other literary works, on the history of the reign of Akbar compiled under royal orders and the Insha or letters written by him on behalf of his master and on his own behalf. He was directed by his master to 'write with the pen of sincerity the account of the glorious events and of our dominion increasing victories'. 'It is a strange coincidence', says Abul Fazal, 'that I should be about the arsenal in search of a sword, while fate would force a pen into a master hand.' Abul Fazal thus states the manner in which he set about writing the *Akbar Namah*:

> 'Assuredly, I spent much labour and research in collecting the records and narrative of his Majesty's actions and I was a long time interrogating the servants of the State and the old members of the illustrious family. I examined both prudent, truth-speaking old men and active-minded, right-actioned young ones and reduced their statements to

writing. The royal commands were issued to the provinces, that those who from old service remembered, with certainty or with adminicle of doubt, the events of the past, should copy out their notes and memoranda and transmit them to Court. Inasmuch as this auspicious invitation was not fully responded to nor my wish fully accomplished, a second command shone forth from the holy Presence-chamber; to wit—that the materials which had been collected should be faired out and recited in the royal hearing and that whatever might have to be written down afterwards should be introduced into the noble volume as a supplement, and that such details as, on account of the minuteness of the enquiries and the minutiae of affairs, could not then be brought to an end, should be inserted afterwards at my leisure. Being relieved by this royal order—the interpreter of the Divine ordinance—from the secret anxiety of my heart, I proceeded to reduce into writing the rough draughts which were void of the graces of arrangement and style. I obtained the chronicle of events beginning with the nineteenth year of the Divine Era, when the Record Office was established by the enlightened intellect of his Majesty, and from its rich pages I gathered the accounts of many events. Great pains too were taken to procure originals or copies of most of the orders which had been issued to the provinces from the accession up to the present day which is the dawn of Fortune's morning. Their sacred contents yielded much material for the sublime volume. I also took much trouble to incorporate many of the reports which ministers and high officials had submitted, about the affairs of the empire and the events of foreign countries. And my labour-loving soul was satiated by the apparatus of inquiry and research. I also exerted myself energetically to collect the rough notes and memoranda of sagacious well-informed men. By these means, I constructed a reservoir for irrigating and moistening the rose garden of fortune. But inasmuch as, notwithstanding all this apparatus and these rich treasures of information, the House of History was become decayed from lapse of time, and there were contradictions and imperfections in the accounts and no sufficient means of clearing up difficulties—I begged the correction of what I had heard from his Majesty who, by virtue of his perfect memory, recollects every occurrence in gross and in detail, from the time he was one year old—when the material reason came into action—till the present day when he is by his wisdom the cynosure of penetrating truth-seekers. By repeated interviews I arrived at correctness and erased doubts and difficulties with the knife of investigation and ascertainment. When peace had possessed my soul, I made honesty and lavish labour conductors of the lofty undertaking.'

Abul Fazal originally intended to write four volumes on Akbar's reign and a fifth volume as a supplement to it was to be devoted to administrative institutions established by Akbar. The original draft was revised five times before it was submitted to Akbar in the forty-second year of his reign. *Ain-i-Akbari* was completed earlier and submitted in 1593. When *Akbar Namah* was first brought to the notice of the officers of the court and other learned men, considerable jealousy was excited. Some praised Abul Fazal for his great achievement and their congratulations 'drowned him with the perspiration of modesty'. Others less competent and more envious 'loosened the tongue of reproof and begrimed with dust the simple hearted'.

> 'A certain enlightened man', says Abul Fazal, 'was well disposed towards me, and used to regard me with friendly eyes. Our conversation turned upon the book, and out of kindness he said to me, "Why do you take such pains (zahmat), and why do you write in such a style? Will one out of thousands come into existence who will read this glorious volume aright, and be instructed by the new magic of its method? From whom do you expect the effectual recognition of the Truth? When shall an exalted sage draw the veil from over your work? 'Twere far better to fold away these new-fangled coverlets (table-carpets), and to speak in the language of the age, and to spread a plenteous table for the generality!"
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> 'My soul was soothed by his appreciation, and I was delighted with his affection. The nobleness of his personality induced me to answer him, and I opened out the casket of truth. "There's ample provision for ordinary guests. I am preparing a dainty morsel for the Unique One of Time. What have I to do with a crowd? Celestial things are glorified by being presented nobly to the king of enlightenment. What connection have they with the common herd?" '

Various opinions have been held about this book of Abul Fazal. That his work forms the most complete and authentic history of Akbar's reign is beyond dispute. His literary attainments, his acute and analytical mind, the position he held at the court and the confidence he enjoyed of his master, his great industry and honesty of purpose eminently fitted him to become Historiographer-Royal of the Mughals.

In India Abul Fazal has been regarded as a master of style and unexcelled in the epistolary art. The author of *Maasirul Umara* thus expresses his opinion about him as a writer: 'As a writer: Abul Fazal stands unrivalled. His style is grand and is free from the technicalities and flimsy pettiness of other Munshis; and the force of his words, the structure of his sentences, the suitableness of his compounds, and the elegance of his periods are such that it would be difficult for anyone to imitate him.' Elliot and Elphinstone, however, have passed undeserved strictures on both his style and the fairness of his account of his royal master. 'Though he was a man of enlarged views', says Elliot, 'and extraordinary talents, yet, as Elphinstone remarks, he was a professed rhetorician and is still the model of the unnatural style which is so much admired in India. He was besides a most assiduous courtier eager to extol the virtues, to gloss over the crimes and to preserve the dignity of his master and those in whom he was interested. . . . His narrative is florid, fickle, and indistinct, overloaded with commonplace reflections and pious effusions, generally ending in a compliment to his patron.'

Akbar Namah is a detailed history of the reign of Akbar. The first part deals with Akbar's birth and the reigns of his grandfather and father Babar and Humayun, the second part deals with Akbar's reign from the first to the end of the forty-sixth year, and the third is the famous *Ain-i-Akbari* which according to Jarret 'will deservedly go down to posterity as a unique compilation of the systems of administration and control throughout the various departments of Government in a great empire faithfully and minutely recorded in their smallest detail, with such an array of facts illustrative of its extent, resources, condition, population, industry, and wealth as the abundant material supplied from official sources could furnish'.

History according to Abul Fazal is a 'unique pearl of science which quiets perturbations, physical and spiritual, and gives light to darkness external and internal'. Chronicles are records of festivities and convivial parties as well as an account of battles and campaigns. They embody the knowledge of mankind, the wisdom of the wise, the mistakes of the learned, the vicissitudes of life, vain endeavour and empty yearnings and other wonderful singularities of human existence. If enlightenment be brought to the task of chronicle writing and regard be had to what is proper, a second life is bestowed on the inquiring and the laborious. His object was to compose a history 'suitable to the temperament of the mortal' with a 'cryptic tongue'. 'It is evident', says he, 'that of mighty monarchs of old there is no memorial except in the works of the historians of their age and no trace of them but in the chronicles of eloquent and judicious annalists.' He declares that he has compiled this history with scrupulous regard for truth. It has been his practice to be critical of self and indulgent towards others. No financial considerations or hopes of worldly advancement influenced him in the composition of this book. In his writings Abul Fazal is singularly free from giving way to rancour or personal recriminations. The sobriety of his statements, the dignity of diction, and the dispassionate way in which he speaks of his enemies and detractors reveal the nobility of his character and the genuine pursuit of truth.

Abul Fazal's view of history can only be understood by a careful analysis of the social and political milieu in which he lived. 'History', says Professor Turner, 'is the natural propaganda of a social order; for this reason the oft-quoted words "History is past politics" ought to read "History is present politics".' Akbar's age is an age of political, social, and intellectual ferment. The basic need of the times was political and social stability and the quest for security is the dominating motivating power. Akbar relentlessly viewed the realities of the Indian social and political scene and was determined to feel such realities and to measure up to them inwardly. Love of power and the desire to maintain and assert it, to legitimize institutions and to stabilize his rule made him stand forth as the supreme wielder of authority over all his subjects irrespective of the difference in creed, race, or language. This charismic character of Kingship required not only military power to build it up but academic propaganda to sustain it. Abul Fazal was eminently fitted by training and temperament to stand forth as the champion of Akbar's claim. He is thus more of a literary artist than a scientific historian. He writes as an advocate and an apologist.

At times, particularly when he is championing the claim of Akbar as the divinely guided ruler, he writes on an abstract plane and in turgid prose, but never deviates from his purpose. His one object is to exalt his master round whom his entire world revolved and whose service according to him was the service of his God. He does not enter into theological discussions to establish the claim of Akbar as the spiritual and temporal head of his subjects. The basic dualism he ignores and accepts the claim as based on Reason, which is the sole guide in all such matters.

Besides this official history of the reign of Akbar, we have several other works by Muslim writers that supplement the *Akbar Namah* and act as a corrective to the eulogistic account of this monarch left to posterity by Abul Fazal. Of these the two most important are *Muntakhib-ut-Tawarikh* of Mulla Abdul Qadir of Badaun and the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Bakhshi.

Abdul Qadir was born in August 1540. He studied first under Shaikh Hatim Sambhali and later under the famous Shaikh Mubarak along with Faizi and Abul Fazal.

In 1574 he was presented to Akbar who appointed him as an *imam* and gave him 1,000 *bighas* of land as *madad-i-maash*. Akbar was impressed by his range of theological learning and his ability to break the pride of the learning of the Mullas. After the introduction of Abul Fazal at the court Abdul Qadir was thrown into the background and from then onward he never forgave Akbar or Abul Fazal for the fact that his merit did not receive the recognition which it deserved. The result was the *Muntakhib-ut-Tawarikh* in which he severely castigates Abul Fazal, Faizi, and Akbar. He not only disliked Akbar's free thought and eclecticism, but was disgusted with the Emperor's patronage of men of different persuasions to the detriment of the Muslims who claimed to have the sole title to government offices and patronage. His work was completed shortly before his death and according to Khafi Khan its publication was suppressed by Jahangir.

According to Badauni 'the science of History is essentially a lofty science and an elegant branch of learning, because it is the fountain-head of the learning of the experienced and the source of the experience of the learned and discriminating, and the writers of stories and biographies from the time of Adam to this present time in which we live have completed reliable compositions and comprehensive works, and have proved the excellence thereof by proofs and demonstrations, but it must not be supposed that the reading and study of this science—as certain lukewarm religionists, and the party of doubt and dissent shortsighted as they are, are wont to affirm—has been or will be a cause of wandering from the straight path of the illustrious law of Muhammad. . . . I shall now explain what it was that originally led me to collect these fragments. Since a complete revolution, both in legislation and in manners, greater than any of which there is any record for the past thousand years, has taken place in these days, and every writer who has had the ability to record events and to write two connected sentences has, for the sake of flattering the people of this age, or for fear of them, or by reason of his ignorance of matters of faith, or of his distance from court, or for his own selfish ends, concealed the truth, and, having bartered his faith for worldly profit, and right guidance for error, has adorned falsehood with the semblance of truth, and distorted and embellished infidelity and pernicious trash until they have appeared to be laudable. . . . I have made bold to chronicle these events, a course very far removed from that of prudence and circumspection. But God (He is glorious and honoured!) is my witness, and sufficient is God as a witness, that my inducement to write this has been nothing but sorrow for the faith, and heart-burning for the deceased Religion of Islam, which 'Anqa-like turning its face to the Qaf of exile, and withdrawing the shadow of its wings from the dwellers in the dust of this lower world, thenceforth became a nonentity, and still is so.'

The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* was written in 1592–3. It is a general history beginning with the Ghaznavids and coming down to the end of the thirty-eighth year of Akbar's reign. The History has been held in high repute for its sobriety and authentic account of the events of the period which it covers. It became the basis of subsequent works. The author held important offices under Akbar and was held in high esteem. Badauni writing on the death of Nizamuddin says, 'Khwaja Nizamuddin left a good name behind him. . . . There was not a dry eye at his death and there was no person who did not on the day of his funeral call to mind his excellent qualities.' In the preface to the book Nizamuddin thus expresses the object of writing this book:

'I, Nizam ud-din Ahmad, son of Mohammad Mukim al-Harawi, who am one of the favoured protégés of the Court of His Imperial Highness, the increasing shadow of the most True, and the vice-regent of the Almighty, etc., Abdu'l-Fath, Jalalud-din Muhammad Akbar Badshah Ghazi—I, Nizam ud-din, beg to represent that from my youth, according to the advice of my father, I devoted myself to the study of works of history, which are the means of strengthening the understanding of men of education, and of affording instruction by examples to men of observation; and by continually enquiring into the affairs of the travellers on the high road of life, which is to make the tour of realities: I thus removed the rust from my inert disposition.'

The period from Jahangir to Aurangzeb (1606–1707) is rich in historical literature produced under the direction and control of the contemporary rulers or by independent writers. For the period of Jahangir who ascended the throne in 1606, we have three different versions of Memoirs written by him. The version which has been accepted as authentic was written by the Emperor himself and covers the period from his accession to the end of the twelfth year of his reign. Copies of this were prepared and distributed amongst relatives and officials. The Memoirs were continued up to the seventeenth year, but failing health compelled Jahangir to appoint Mutamad Khan to continue the work under his supervision. This was done till the nineteenth year. They were finally re-edited in the time of Muhammad Shah by Muhammad Hadi, who brought them to the end of Jahangir's reign. The Memoirs are a priceless record of the reign of Jahangir and are distinguished by their frankness and lucidity. Besides the account of military and political transactions the Memoirs are rich in details about the social, cultural, and spiritual life of this period and the keen observations of Jahangir about men and manners.

Mutamad Khan, who was Persian by birth, held important posts under Jahangir. His *Iqbal Namah-i-Jahangiri*, which was compiled at the insistence of the Emperor, gives an account of the history of Babar, Humayun, Akbar, and Jahangir. For the first seventeen years of Jahangir's reign he mainly depended on Jahangir's Memoirs.

Another important work about this period is *Maathir-i-Jahangiri*, which was completed in 1630. This work was undertaken at the insistence of Shah Jahan. The Khwaja was in a position to secure the best available evidence, verbal as well as written, and has made a good use of the same.

In the reign of Shah Jahan which was a period of peace and prosperity there was all-round development in art and literature, and historical literature received a new fillip under him. The most important work of this period is the *Padshah Namah* of Abdul Hamid, which is a voluminous and authoritative account of Shah Jahan's reign. Abdul Hamid was commissioned by the Emperor to write a history of his reign and he chose

Abul Fazal as a model. Abdul Hamid's account is full and detailed, and one gets a deep understanding of the political, social, and cultural life of this period. The work was continued by his pupil, Muhammad Waris. The latter has added at the end of his work a list of the shaikhs, scholars, and poets who flourished during this period. One particular feature of Abdul Hamid's work is the insistence it lays on the king's being the defender of the faith. Shah Jahan's period is a period of religious orthodoxy, and the character and spirit of the age are exhibited in miniature in all the books written during this period. In the introduction of his book Abdul Hamid Lahori lays stress on two things—firstly, that salvation cannot be attained except by following the path of the Shariat, and secondly, that the basis of stability of a government is the fear and awe inspired by the king.

Aurangzeb is reported to have issued injunctions that no historian was to chronicle the events of his reign. The two best-known histories of this period are Muhammad Kazim's *Alamgir Namah* and *Maathir-i-Alamgiri*. The Emperor directed Muhammad Kazim to write an account in accordance with the usual practice of his predecessors. After the eleventh year, to which Muhammad Kazim brought down his history, Aurangzeb withdrew his permission for the preparation of this official history. According to Jadu Nath Sarkar this was due to the financial difficulties of Aurangzeb. This, however, does not appear to be correct. Aurangzeb abandoned the practice of employing an official historiographer because, on account of increasing political and diplomatic complications, he did not want the accounts of his reign to be made public. Moreover, he was of the view that the cultivation of the internal piety was preferable to the ostentatious display of his achievements. The best history of this period is that of Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan, commonly known as *Maathir-i-Alamgiri*. The book was published after the death of Aurangzeb and the author, who had been in the service of the king for forty years, was an eye-witness of many of the events recorded by him. His style is simple and straightforward, but he does not mention his sources. The deficiency of official history of the reign of Aurangzeb is made up by numerous letters of Aurangzeb that are extant, accounts of foreign travellers, literary history of the period, and non-official histories written by contemporaries soon after his death.

General Observations

The historians of this period appear to have been unable to formulate and expound any particular philosophy of history. Most of them assiduously collected evidence from the dust-heap of the past but failed to coordinate and interpret this evidence. They relate facts but fail to distinguish causes and to formulate results. Every occurrence is explained away either as the result of a past action or as a portent of events to come. The passion for moralizing makes the narrative artificial and jejune. History is looked upon largely as a collection of examples from which one may learn lessons for successful and virtuous life. The author of *Mirat-i-Aftab Nama* has thus stated the value of the study of history and it is in this spirit that most of our medieval historians approached it:

> 'It is well known to those who are expert in reading the book of time that History is a noble science and a subtle art. By devoting oneself to the study of History one can reap the benefits in this world and the world beyond; and by studying History one can also acquaint himself with the evil and mischief prevailing in this world. The wise and the virtuous, by devoting themselves to this science can deduce certain laws and principles, which, if put into practice, will yield much benefit.
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> 'Man knows the reality of things by applying his reason (to them) but it is impossible to learn the history of the people who lived in the past, through reason alone. Again, all the things perceptible to the senses fall into two categories; some of them are observed and some of them can be heard. Obviously those that can be observed are far less than those that can be heard. And the affairs of the entire world belong to those that can be heard, because it is not possible for a single individual to observe everything in the minutest details; neither can one experience personally all that comes under his observation. Therefore, there is no other way than to accept the sayings of the honest and the pious. And it is for this reason that the basis for right thinking has been found in the habit to hear from others. And the knowledge which we acquire through hearing the account of our forefathers is known as the Science of History.
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> 'By devoting ourselves to the study of history we can distinguish good from evil. It is therefore desirable that having ascertained the cause of evil, which leads to misery, we should abstain from it when we are called to action; and we should ascertain the cause of good and adopt it as conformity with it leads to progress and perfection. The history of nations, which lived in distant past, has also been described in the Holy Quran. We are told that some nations adopted evil ways and were destroyed; while other nations attained great power and progress because they chose certain good habits. (This has been described in the Holy Quran) so that the readers and listeners may learn a lesson (from it). And it is one of the graces of God that He made it easy to learn (history) although the science is extremely beneficial and useful; and He did not make it difficult to learn as is the case with other sciences. And that (science) can be learnt only if one cares to learn it by memorizing all occurrences. When one learns the facts and events about the people who lived in the past and devotes his time to remember them he, undoubtedly, attains his purpose.'

PART II

HISTORICAL WRITING IN THE PERIODS OF EUROPEAN DOMINANCE AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

(A) *Writings in Western Languages*

13. FIVE PORTUGUESE HISTORIANS[1]

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In the fifth volume of the *Cambridge History of India*, in the bibliography to the first chapter, three general histories, in English, on Portuguese activities in India and the Indian Ocean are listed: those of F. C. Danvers, K. G. Jayne, and R. S. Whiteway. These three, written at the turn of the century, and the *Cambridge History* itself, remain the main works available in English. Of them only Danvers attempts to cover more than the first century of the Portuguese in Asia. If they are studied it will be found that they rest, in the main, upon the works of five Portuguese historians, Barros, Couto, Bocarro, Castanheda, and Correa, who all lived and wrote within a century and a half of the Portuguese arrival in India.[2] For most English or Indian students, then, the history of the period remains that written by a group of Renaissance Portuguese—spiced with Victorian asides. Because their view of history, in an Englished selection, has so long held the field, and because they are indeed five magnificent writers, I have concentrated my attention upon them.

These five historians had several points in common. First, they were all laymen—in marked contrast to the Spanish writers on Asia, nearly all members of one or other of the Religious Orders, of whom Professor Boxer has written. As a result, though their writings are tinged more or less deeply by religious sentiment, their works are secular histories. Miraculous interventions in storms at sea, the apparition and aid of saints in battle or siege, and the intervening judgements of God, all occur in their pages. But it is remarkable how little of the missionary effort made by the Portuguese finds its way into their narratives, and with what scant attention the religious motive in Portuguese activity is dismissed.

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[1] Joao de Barros, *Da Asia*, 1552 and 1615. Diogo do Couto, *Da Asia*: Decada IV 1602, V 1612, VI 1612–14, VII 1616, VIII 1673, IX 1736, X 1736 (a fragment), 1788 (in full), XI (lost, partly supplied in the *Vida de D. Paulo de Lima Pereira* (Lisbon, 1765), XII 1645 (at Paris). *Diálogo do Soldado Pratico* and *Diálogo do Soldato Pratico Portuguez* (Lisbon, 1790). Antonio Bocarro, *Decada 13 da Historia da India* (Lisbon, 1876). Fernão Lopez de Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquesto da India polos Portugueses*, Books I–VII, Coimbra 1551–4, VIII 1561, IX (31 chapters) (The Hague, 1929). Gaspar Correa, *Lendas da India* (Lisbon, 1858–64).

[2] *The Cambridge History of India* does of course mention several specialist studies by Sir Denison Ross, M. L. Dames, J. J. A. Campos, and P. E. Pieris, and there are others of more recent date by G. W. F. Stripling and C. R. Boxer. Portuguese Jesuit writings have also been used for Mughul studies, by Vincent Smith, C. H. Payne and others.

Then, all of them were officials, three of them brought up in the royal household. Barros, the only one never to visit India, served from 1525 as Treasurer, and from 1532 to 1567 as Crown Agent in the India House at Lisbon. Couto spent some fifty years in India, ten as a soldier, many more as Master of the Arsenals at Goa, and finally as Keeper of the Records. Bocarro, after a chequered start, for he was a New Christian, with Jewish blood in his veins and got into trouble with the Inquisition at Cochin, succeeded to Couto's old post as Keeper of the Records, thanks to the favour of the Viceroy, the Conde de Linhares. Castanheda went out with his father, the first Judge appointed to Goa, and served there ten years, seeing both Malacca and the Moluccas. Correa, who went out in 1512, and at once became one of the secretaries of the great Afonso d'Albuquerque, acted, after Albuquerque's death, as Inspector of Works, and then as Writer in the Cochin factory, dying, still in subordinate office, after serving in India for over fifty years. As a result, and again this is in contrast to the Spanish writers on the Philippines, their histories have an official flavour, being based in greater or lesser degree on archival material. Correa was secretary to a Governor, Couto and Bocarro were in charge of the Goa archives, and Barros, in Lisbon, had ready access to official material, while all three were officially chosen to write the history of the Portuguese in Asia.

They were all of them, too, heirs to a centuries-old tradition of national chronicles or histories, in both Portugal and Spain. Alfonso X of Spain (*d.* 1284) ordered, and perhaps took part in, the writing of a Chronicle of the Spanish peninsula from the time of Noah for which the Bible, the Fathers, all the classical authorities, French and English chronicles, and Arab works, were all pressed into use. The chronicle was continued by Sancho IV, reworked in the mid-sixteenth century by Zamora, the historian of Charles V, and reprinted again in 1604. In addition, from the fifteenth century, histories of individual rulers appeared, by the chancellor Ayala and his nephew Guzman, in which narrative was displaced by portraiture, with more emphasis on personality, judgement, and interpretation.

In Portugal Fernão Lopes, Keeper of the Records, Chronicler and Secretary to the Prince (later King) Duarte, wrote chronicles of D. João, D. Pedro, and D. Fernando. He was the first of a line of official chroniclers appointed by the Crown to write the national history. ('National' is the proper word—his width of vision led Robert Southey to acclaim him 'the greatest chronicler of any age or nation'.) He was succeeded by Zurara, who wrote the chronicle of D. João I and the taking of Ceuta, the official biography of D. Pedro de Menezes, captain of that fortress, for which he went in person to view the scene of action in Morocco, and, on royal orders, the Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guiné. Third in the line, and again Chronicler and Keeper of the Records, was Ruy de

Pina, who wrote the more court-centred histories of D. Afonso V and D. João II. It was to him, Barros tells us, that Albuquerque sent rich gifts, so that he 'would glorify his doings'.

There was thus a clear tradition of historical writing about the king and nation, under royal patronage and direction, in both Portugal and Spain, and numerous references in the works of the five historians make it clear that they were thoroughly familiar with these national chronicles. The form of their writings was thus, in a sense, imposed upon them all.

Barros, then, conceived and wrote his history, 'Of the deeds done by the Portuguese in the conquest and discovery of the lands and seas of the East', as an extension of the national chronicles. He had consciously prepared for his task. As a page in the household of the Infante João, he had written his romance, the Chronicle of the Emperor Clarimundo, as a sample of his powers, and on the strength of it had been charged with the writing of a history of the Portuguese in Asia. The Prince's death, and the heavy responsibilities of his duties in the India House, had thereafter left him with scant leisure, though excellent opportunities, for collecting his materials. Meanwhile, as Governor followed Governor in India, no one except Zurara[3] attempted to write about the history of India's discovery. Preparations were made, Francisco d'Almeida and Afonso d'Albuquerque were both ordered by the king to write to him in detail about the events and deeds in Asia, and D. João III sent orders, drafted by Lourenço de Caceres, Barros' uncle, to Nuno da Cunha to do likewise. Eventually Caceres was commissioned to write upon Portuguese Asia, but nothing was achieved, 'perhaps' as Barros has it 'because of his death'. His nephew thereupon took up the task.

It is against the background of Portugal's history that Barros begins his Decadas, and his chronicle opens with the advance through Africa into the peninsula by the Moors, the reconquest, the grant of Portugal to Count D. Henrique, and so through four hundred years of continuous war with the infidel to the moment when the rulers of Portugal can claim to be Lords of the Conquest, Navigation and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India. Even then Barros writes as one looking outwards from Europe: the contrast between his long account of the Crown's laborious prosecution of the discovery of the sea-route, and the abrupt plunge into the Indian Ocean in Castanheda or Correa is most striking. In the tradition of Ruy de Pina the king and fidalgos loom large—and since he was an official historian, a little too virtuous—the common soldier or official in India rather small. Indeed, he expressly states 'we have cared more for the substance of our history than to dwell on details'. So he proceeds in vigorous, smooth-flowing periods to the orderly and balanced unfolding of his story, pausing now and then to cast a sweeping glance over the whole structure of the spice trade before its disruption by the Portuguese, or to place his account of Malabar against the general setting of the kingdoms to the East. But if there is a rhetorical quality, a conscious imitation of Livy, in his writings, it is firmly based on research. The biography of Manoel Severim de Faria explains that Barros was given all the papers necessary for his history—royal instructions, the letters of the Viceroys, and proceedings of judicial inquiries. The Decadas show that he had read the Spanish and Portuguese chronicles, and that he gathered books, maps, and manuscripts from all over Asia. He possessed a 'tarigh' in Persian which he used for Muslim history, a genealogy of the Kings of Quiloa, chronicles of the Kings of Gujarāt, Vijayanagar, and the Deccan. His description of the Persian Gulf is taken 'from the geography of the Arabs themselves, and the Persians, of which we have five books, two in Arabic, three in Persian', and that of China from a printed Chinese cosmography and map. He was not himself a linguist, but for his translations used his Gujarāti slave, or the Chinese, speaking Portuguese and skilled in Arabic numerals, whom he bought for the purpose, or, as Faria tells us, the skilled translators in the King's service. At the India House he questioned returning pilots and officials, pumped Domingos de Seixas, twenty-five years in Siam as prisoner and then as captain in the King's forces, who, with his very exact memory 'threw great light on what we have written of that kingdom', or drew upon Tenreiro's experience of Persia and the Persian Court.

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[3] Barros acknowledges, in his first Decada dealing with the African discoveries, a considerable debt to Zurara.

His interest in geography is evident from the frequent set descriptions he includes, but he also has something to say about administration, as in his note on the succession of Governors—an obvious point, but then 'writers of history fail to write on many things because they are very familiar to those living in that land and time'. But on the only occasion when he has much to say, about the actual conduct of the vital pepper trade, he adds, 'we record this here, not for reasons of history, but as an official holding the office of Factor'. However, if he did not think it proper to include such matters in his history—which he planned on a vast scale, with other volumes on Portugal, Africa, and Brazil—it was not for lack of interest in them. He wrote a full account of the produce and commerce of the East, and another, equally voluminous, on the geography of all the lands discovered by the Portuguese. Both were lost after his death and Couto, who writes of him as 'our great João de Barros, a man most learned in geography', laments the loss most bitterly.

Barros gives a picture of his ideal historian, Zurara, which may serve as a final comment upon himself: 'Keeper of the Records, a very proper office of the Chroniclers, it being the storehouse for all the records of the kingdom, which ought to pass before the eyes of its chronicler, so that with greater truth and abundance he may write the whole story of the doings of the King . . . if he wishes and knows how to use so much writing. And truly—returning to Gomez Eanez (de Zurara), who was both Chronicler and Keeper of the Records, I do not know how long he lived, or when he held these offices, but I do know, from the handiwork he left, that he was no unprofitable servant, but worthy of the offices he filled, both in his style and in his diligent treatment of events.'

Barros only completed three of his Decadas, bringing the story to 1526, but the fourth which he planned, and for which he left notes, was published by Lavanha in 1615. His narrative was taken up by Diogo do Couto, whose Decadas overlap, for Philip II ordered him to continue from 1526.

Couto was a page of Prince Luis, brother of D. João III, was educated at his expense by the Jesuits, and became an accomplished scholar. On the death of the Prince he went out to India, and for ten years served as a soldier. He saw service in Gujarāt, was in the landing of D. Antão de Noronha at Mangalore, and later passed down the whole west coast of India. He returned to Portugal in 1569, wintering at Mozambique, whence he assisted home the destitute Camoes. By 1571 he was back in India where he married and found employment as Master of the Arsenals. Finally, after much effort, he secured the position of Keeper of the Records in Goa, and was appointed historian by that great patron, Philip II.

He began his history with the year 1580—that of Philip's accession to the throne of Portugal—but turned back to 1526 to take up the story from Barros, in much the same style, and with a wealth of classical allusion. But a series of extraordinary thefts, losses, and disasters[4] forced him in old age to rewrite most of his books with a consequent loss of literary design and effect, but a gain in freshness, directness, and sharpness. Not all that he wrote has survived—the eleventh book disappeared, though his Life of D. Paulo de Luna Pereira is, in effect, an excerpt from it, while at his death in 1616 the twelfth book had only been carried down to the year 1600. On the other hand the two versions of the *Dialogo do Soldado Pratico* have both survived and provide a pungent personal commentary upon his formal history.

This history of the years 1526 to 1600 is firmly based. Couto used the histories of Damiao de Goes, who succeeded Zurara and Ruy de Pina as Chronicler of Portugal, Barros, Castanheda, who 'would not have written anything without good reason', Lopo de Souza Couthinho,[5] Jeronymo Corte Real,[6] and a tremendous list of classical authorities (notably in his identification of Ceylon with Ptolomy's Tapobrana). He drew more information from Gabriel Rabello, thirteen years in the Moluccas, from

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[4] Cf. C. R. Boxer, 'Three historians of Portuguese Asia (Barros, Couto and Bocarro)' in the *Boletim do Instituto Portugues de Honkong*, vol. i (Macau, 1948).

[5] Author of *Livro primeiro do Cerco de Diu* (Coimbra, 1556).

[6] *Sucesso do segundo cerco de Diu* (Lisbon, 1574).

D. João de Castro's *Roteiro* of the Red Sea, from a Venetian account of the Turkish attack on Diu, and from Turks, left behind in Gujarāt, with whom he discussed the campaign. He had the archives to draw upon, though as he relates it was not easy to compel officials to deposit papers there, and also consulted the archives of the bishopric of Goa. But most important of all he was himself an eye-witness, writing on the spot. It was here that he scored over Barros: 'Although João de Barros has written very well about this . . . we will go into it because he omitted some things which we are able to enquire into more nearly.' He fits out the armadas, he knows Marcos Rodrigues, who, as a boy, was captured by the Zamorin's forces in Ceylon, and who, at the time of writing, 'is still living, and married in Bacaim with a lady of gentle blood', he makes a point of relating how this or that governor called him over for a chat, and he expounds the solar origin of the kings of Ceylon from their chronicles 'which we heard a Prince of Ceylon sing in verses, as is their way, which an interpreter translated as he sang'.

His history of Portuguese activity in Asia is thus extremely full—every skirmish, every semi-piratical cruise, every Council held in Goa, has the names of most of those taking part attached to it. It is also very lively: 'They were corpulent men, broad-shouldered, with large and heavy faces, and their portraits have been so placed that they remain eyeing one another with great frowns, as though they distrusted one another.' It can also be very sharp: 'We no longer see the soldiers housed, except in the porches of the monasteries, eating the poor ration of the Brothers, who scarcely have any for themselves. And the houses of the captains, which used to be their quarters and their hospitals, in which they used to be supplied with the equipment for their service . . . are now turned into counting-houses, where everything is bales, chests, buying, selling and tyrannizing in their fortresses the poor among the Portuguese who are settled there, as though the world was made for them alone; for the poor soldiers find no better protectors in some of the Governors and Viceroys, as though they were not fellow-countrymen and neighbours, and did not cost the King much wealth in getting them to India, where most of them end in want, begging alms from door to door. I want to shout all this aloud, and cry out at the feet of the King, that either he should remedy this, or not send his vassals, at so much cost, to die in need, in the sight of Moors and Gentoos, who now have more compassion on them than we ourselves.' This passage and many like it, and others in which he sharply attacks the clerics for their greed, pride, and meddlesomeness, are in surprising contrast to the blandness of his predecessor as official historian, Barros, who, where he did criticize an individual, would usually begin with an 'others suggest . . .' They explain why Couto's manuscripts were stolen and delayed in publication, and remind us that he wrote as a minor official, who had been constantly opposed as Keeper of the Records, and that, though he had been a page in the palace, he never overcame the obstacle of being humbly born in a world for fidalgos. Though his bitterness comes out most clearly in his Dialogue of an Old Soldier, a long exposure of abuses, it bursts out here and there in the Decadas: 'many cavaliers and gentlemen there are in India, who were no worse born than some of these Fidalgos; who have more experience and understanding of all sorts of affairs; and whose opinions would be of great service to God and the King; then why should the Fidalgo, four days in India, give his vote on the difficult matters of Malacca, the Moluccas, Ceylon, and the Persian Gulf, when he may never see more than the Malabar fleet, when there are old and honoured cavaliers, who have seen and treated of them, and could give very sound and certain information about them all?'

Bocarro, the last of the official historians, was appointed Chronicler and Keeper of the Records at Goa by the Conde de Linhares in 1631, and held the post until his death in 1649 (or earlier), though on only half the pay that Couto had received. His Decada, only published in 1876, begins with the appointment of D. Jeronimo de Ajevedo as Viceroy in 1612, and nominally only covers his five-year tenure of office, though events of the previous viceroyalty are often touched upon. There is thus a gap in the Decadas of rather less than a dozen years, for Bocarro expected that Couto's final volume would extend, when published, to 1612.

Bocarro is less lively, more formal than Couto—he was naturally cautious after his experience with the Inquisition—but extraordinarily detailed, honest, and thorough, taking 750 pages, or over a quarter of a million words, to cover these rather more than five years of Portuguese doings in the East. Though he follows the general pattern of Barros and Couto, he has much more to say about Macau, and the political, commercial, and religious relations of the Portuguese with the Chinese and Japanese, than the other historians. He has an exceptionally interesting section on the Zambezi empire of Manamotapa, its geography, mineral wealth, fairs and trade routes, government, people and customs, and he includes detailed itineraries of the great up-country journeys of Gaspar Bocarro and Diogo Simoes de Madeira. He is very full on the diplomatic activities in the Persian Gulf, which in these years were complicated by the arrival of the English and the activities of the Shirley brothers. His whole account of the relations between Burma, Siam, and the other states of S.E. Asia is very clear, and indeed his whole picture of the political organization of Asia shows a width of viewpoint, and an interest in the Asian powers, which seem much more modern than the rest. He also has rather more to say about the Portuguese administration than Couto, slipping into his account of the instructions given to Antão Vas Freire in Ceylon, or the activities of the Judge Antonio Barreto, a good deal of covert criticism.

Bocarro rarely mentions the source of his information, though he often quotes official documents without saying so, and even where the vivid detail makes it clear that he relied upon eye-witnesses he is reluctant to give the credit to anyone by name. (Yet he is ready to bemoan his dependence upon information 'which in India is always directed by self-interest, hatreds or affections'.) He does point out, however, the great difficulties he faced in preparing the history of events already twenty years old when he began writing, when many who knew what had really happened were dead. The Viceroy's stringent orders to the cities and fortresses of Portuguese Asia to furnish accounts of what had happened were largely ignored, and he himself had not got Couto's hold over men, for the certificates of service, on which rewards were based, no longer passed through his hands —and who would gladly relate their deeds now when all is 'interlarded with many losses, deaths, and disasters'?

If the Duke of Alva could never have a clear picture of his own battles 'how can one, in respect of events which happened 20 years ago, in parts so remote by sea and land, achieve a true picture of what part each person played, what motives and causes there were to produce this or that result, and what circumstances, convenient or otherwise, came together in these intentions and results? All of which is as much a part of the duty of the chronicler, as is the need to carry forward his history with a true grasp of all these matters . . . for history is the soul of life.' Bocarro states his difficulties, but in his history, remarkably overcomes them.[7]

After Barros, Couto, and Bocarro, Castanheda, the first book of whose *History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese* was actually the first to appear in print, often seems lacking in style, colour, and grasp. His introduction, with its pedestrian claims for history, which make his twenty years as bedel at Coimbra University scarcely surprising, is uninspired and mendicant. His opening chapters are remarkable for their baldness, close dating, hurried narrative and a complete failure to strike any spark of grandeur from Vasco da Gama's voyage. The most interesting sections are the brief accounts of towns, their people, produce, and trade—but these, and longer notices on Vijayanagar, *sati*, and the Lingāyats, are lifted without acknowledgement from the Book of Duarte Barbosa. Happily the first hundred pages are much worse than the next nineteen hundred. His narrative remains plain, without rhetoric—if one excepts his regular miracle-mongering—but when he reaches the point where he can call upon personal experience or acquaintance, it lives. For as he tells us, he not only inquired of those captains and fidalgos who were really in the know, but he himself made a point of seeing the places where the deeds were done, so as to give them more certainty. Couto, who relied on him as a trustworthy source, writes, 'This man was in India for nearly ten years, travelling over the greater part of it as far as Malacca, writing down the events of that time very diligently . . .' and the great value of Castanheda lies in his personal acquaintance with Malacca and the Moluccas, which the others lacked. So, whereas he writes of Malabar in detail, but with little grasp of the local politics involved, he gives an excellent account of the struggles in Ternate and Tidore, moving easily among that tangle of islands and princes, and blossoms out when he comes to describe Pegu. He seems to write with positive affection of the people, 'well educated, and of better condition than any other Gentoos, truthful, and closer to our customs than any others', is interested in the monasteries and in the monks' use of a language other than Burmese—'like latin amongst us'—and gives a wonderful description of the ambassadors of Pegu and Portugal, accompanied by their clergy, successively swearing peace on a palm-leaf manuscript of their scriptures and a copy of the *Cancioneiro geral* open at the poems of Luis da Silveira.

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[7] Bocarro wrote several other works: *On the reform of the State of India*, *The Book of the Deeds of Gonçalo Pereira* and *The Deeds of Sancho de Vasconcellos*, but the only one to survive is his encyclopaedic *Book of the Plans of all the Fortresses, Cities and Towns of the State of Eastern India* which, as Professor Boxer says, 'really justifies the reviewers' cliché "a veritable mine of information".'

Couto's outspoken history straggled into print, Castanheda's ninth and tenth books, which carried his narrative onwards from 1538, were called in by the King at the request of certain fidalgos,[8] but Gaspar Correa's vast history the 'Account of India' was suppressed outright as far too outspoken, and was only published in the middle of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the *Lendas* Correa declared that he would write with complete truth about the noble and evil deeds of all, great and small, 'declaring that I shall not show this record to anyone during my life'. The manuscript does not in fact seem to have been seen by Couto, who acknowledges his debt to so many others, though Frei Luis de Souza, the historian of the Dominicans, quotes from it. Presumably the very bulk of the work, over a million words for the years down to 1550, proved as great a deterrent then as it still does.

Correa, like Couto, seems to have begun to jot down something of what he saw about him soon after his arrival, though with no thought of publishing anything since he expected the continuation of the Chronicles of Portugal to cover what the Portuguese were doing in the East. Having been led from jotting to inquiry, seeking out old officials, even some who had been with da Gama in his first voyage, and securing chronicles of the Portuguese arrival from Muslims and Hindus, especially in Cananar, the work grew. 'I undertook this work with pleasure, for the beginnings of things in India were so golden that there was no hint of the iron beneath, which later appeared, and pressing on with my theme I worked away so that what I had laboured on should not be lost.' So he continued writing and revising, disheartened perhaps by the publication of Barros and Castanheda, and increasingly critical of the growing corruption in India, until 1563.

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[8] Couto writes, 'This book, we were told by trustworthy persons was ordered to be called in by King D. João, at the request of certain fidalgos who took part in that extraordinary and marvellous siege (of Diu) because he had told truths in it. To such and other risks are writers exposed who write them while the men about whom they are told still live'.

In his years of service in India he saw most of India and the area to the west himself, and was present during many of the most notable campaigns, from Ceylon to Juda. As secretary to Albuquerque he could draw upon the Governor's experience, and a great mass of correspondence passed through his hands, so that the 750 pages devoted to the years when Albuquerque was in India are of the very greatest value. (Correa, though in the service of Albuquerque, is always very fair in his treatment of Almeīda.) He used the notes of João Figueira, chaplain in Vasco da Gama's fleet, the notebook of Miguel Ferreira, the log of Giogo de Mesquita Pimental, and the notes of Castanhosa on Abyssinia (though with discretion), and questioned everyone he could. But it is scarcely necessary to stress his care for accuracy, for almost every page has its sharp detail, as well, if as artlessly observed, as are his drawings of towns and fortresses.

He has little style or sense of structure, though he is perhaps no worse than Castanheda, or even Couto, both of whom found the chronicler's narrative of events year by year difficult to manage when they had to cover so many fields of action. (Barros partly solved the problem by dealing chronologically with events in India and westwards, and then India eastwards. Bocarro, isolating topics such as Manamotapa or the progress of Christianity in Japan, and dealing with them once for all, seems the most successful, but then he covered a very short span of time.) But for all the crowded hurry in his work, Correa seems least the chronicler and most the historian. He uses the device of speeches put into the mouth of characters (usually plain enough, and to the point) and with a straightforward piety accepts the miraculous, neither good form today, but he never gives a flat procession of figures and events, but gives an interplay of personalities set in a full world of custom, interests, and geography. He is as interested in character as Ayala or Guzman, and, what is more, in that of a Hindu or Muslim prince or trader as well as that of Portuguese factor or captain. He writes well and fully about all the powers in South India, and is never content to label a man infidel or Moor and so dismiss him. Again, though he excludes general geographical surveys, on the grounds that others, notably Duarte Barbosa, have already said all that is required, he does not deal exclusively with military affairs. He is as ready with details of water tanks and ships' biscuits as the exotic spoils of Malacca, and names the factor and other civil officials as regularly as the fidalgo.

Our five historians, writing within a century of one another, show some definite changes in their attitude to their subject, the Portuguese in Asia. Barros saw the discoveries and conquests as part of the advance against the infidel begun in the twelfth century in Galicia, and he dwells with pride on the grandeur of the Portuguese achievement: 'the matter of which I wished to treat, was the triumphs of this kingdom'. As a court historian he saw Asia, as in the fourteenth-century *Linhageris* of the Count D. Pedro reconquered Portugal had been seen, as a source of new titles and patrimonies for the King, and new honour, glory, and rewards for the nobility, seized from the hands of the barbarian.[9]

He makes no bones about reporting Portuguese reverses and is ready to acknowledge that greed was responsible for the numerous disasters in Malaya and the Spice Islands. But he suppresses the details of dissensions among the fidalgos with 'as our custom is to relate the war with the Moors, and not the passions and divisions between them, we leave such details'. He is ready to acknowledge the individual qualities of the rulers of Melinde or Bahrein, the bravery of the Turks and the white Moors, the sagacity of Malik Ayaz. But he slips back easily into generalizations about 'the Moor' —that barbarous and infidel tribe—whose actions are explained by 'that inborn hatred which all Moors have for Christians', and into the vision of Asia reserved by God for the Portuguese, 'showing us the greatness of these worlds and lands, which he had created for us, with all their treasure and riches'. He recognizes that the major states of India are great powers, and treats them with respect for their military strength. But though, subconsciously, he puts them in a different category from the negro in Africa, the cowardly Goan, the Malabar princes bemused with astrology and idols, or the more savage brutes of upland Sumatra, with the exception of China which impressed him deeply, he does not acknowledge the existence of a Muslim civilization in India. (The one exception, perhaps, is his interested praise for the nautical achievement of the Arabs; he is excited by their maps and instruments, and quotes their geographies as authorities.[10])

Castanheda, though he recognizes the play of commercial motives, tends to give a simple picture of the Portuguese and 'the Moors, our enemies', with God's hand everywhere evident in the Portuguese victories against great odds. There is very much more stress upon the theme of the Christian against the infidel. Barros does describe the shores of Asia as bathed in the blood of martyrs, but the miracles, the priests with the cross in their hands encouraging the soldiers are Castanheda's speciality. (It is possible that the rather fervid faith was inserted with an eye to the success of the book, for Castanheda, stressing his poverty as librarian and apparitor of Coimbra University, seems to have been most anxious for material reward. And the most widely published works on Portuguese Asia were the reports of the Jesuits—with the miraculous history of an Indian, married, 380 years old, printed in Salamanca, Naples, Bologna, Venice, Milan, and Paris, not far behind.) Like Couto he records the slaughter of infidels, men, women, and children, without a hint of disapproval, and when the plot of a Portuguese friend of the Muslim Governor of Calayate, to use that friendship to seize him, miscarries, he expressed regret only for the ill-preparation of the treachery.

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[9] Barros, mentioning that merchants were allowed to engage in the trade with India on presenting the names of proposed ship's captains for royal approval, points out that some of these were more fitted for their mercantile pursuits than illustrious in blood, but that in his history he will only give the names and descent of those fidalgos noted for their nobility, and brought up in the household of the King.

[10] It may well be that had his works on geography and commerce survived it would have been possible to give another estimate of his attitude of mind, for he often refers to fuller accounts of kingdoms and people in his geography.

He does show a real interest in the Burmese and Malays, whose language is 'so soft and easy to pick up', and gives a fuller picture of their culture than of any other. But his observations on India are superficial, travellers' reports which dwell on *sati*, matrilinear succession, the matrimonial habits of the Naires, and his attempts at an historical survey of the Deccan kingdoms are hopelessly garbled. He lacks the grasp of Barros, who saw the whole pattern of Asia, and the imaginative sympathy of Correa. Thus, in his description of Duarte Pachecos' campaigns against the Zamorin, where Correa gives us an enemy whose interests and fears are rational, diverse, and changing, supplies convincing technical reasons for Portuguese success and full credit to the Cochin forces fighting alongside Pacheco, Castanheda monotonously pictures a heroic handful of Portuguese, named to a man, overwhelmingly defeating infidel hordes, inflicting casualties by the thousand and suffering none, though fighting alone and unaided, and explains it all in terms of miracles.

With Couto there is still little love lost for the Moor—or the English—and epithets are vigorous and traditional. But years of living with the Indian powers have brought a change. The brutalities of the Turks at Diu are contrasted with the humanity of the rulers of Gujarāt, and time and again he mentions his own conversations with Turks settled at Broach or Gujarāti chiefs at Cambay who are now the good friends of the Portuguese, with whom one can discuss old campaigns. Though the Sinhalese are sweepingly condemned as weak, false and deceiving, Couto was very interested in Buddhism, and at pains to find out all he could about it. But if he admires the soldierly qualities of old enemies, he dismisses the local Christians as members of a lower order. He urges that conversion be extended, and since God's grace is thinly bestowed in India, that preaching be aided by material reward, but whatever the royal orders might say about the status of the convert, Couto maintains his own colour-bar: 'give the grants to Portuguese soldiers in India, rather than to blacks, as now . . . so that the land may be peopled, and with pure Portuguese stock, and not with sons who have more kinsmen in Cambay than in Trasos-Montes'.[11] As for the Hindu inhabitants of the lands owned by Portuguese settlers, they are discussed in terms of plantation labour, expendable as are the many converted slaves owned by the Portuguese.

Couto was violently critical of the Portuguese government in India—but his criticism is directed towards the failings of the Portuguese themselves. He did not question Barros' vision of the East as a golden oyster but only the substitution of steelyard for sword as the proper instrument for prising it open. His remedy for the decay he saw in the Portuguese position in India was a return to the old fighting simplicity of the first years. 'In the old days when men reached India they asked, "which is the most exposed fortress, or which are the fleets in which servce will win most merit?" but now covetousness has grown so great that on arrival they ask "who is getting ready for China, Japan, for Bengal, for Pegu or for Sunda?", and all go there, so that it will come to what the Moors say of us: "we gained India like warriors, and we shall lose it like merchants".' In his *Dialogue of an Old Soldier* he offers much practical advice, on the rearrangement of command in Ceylon or a longer term of office for the Viceroy, but the great danger he sees is in the corruption of the Portuguese themselves, it is greed and tyranny which wound so deeply—as they destroyed the Roman Empire. (This comparison of Portugal and Rome often occurs, for Couto was fond of airing his wide reading in the classics. The vision of a new Roman empire gives to Couto's work a universal quality, for his Decadas are set not only against the whole European scene, where Turkish preoccupations with the campaign against Louis of Hungary, between Buda and Belgrade affect the safety of Goa, but also against all ancient history.)

Correa, of all the five, writes most completely from India, as though, but for occasional misdirection from Portugal, the State of India was self-sufficient and self-contained. He is also the most concerned with trade—he emphasizes the commercial motives for the discovery of India, and the strenuous efforts made to establish commercial relations without war. He is more interested than the others in the mechanics of the trade and administration of Portuguese India. He is also more interested in the Indian states and their history, for themselves and not necessarily for their connection with or influence upon Portuguese India—and he writes at length upon the Deccan states.

He shares with Couto a deep disillusion about the greed, tyranny, and selfishness of the Portuguese, and in the fourth *Lenda* there are many bitter attacks, such as that on Martin Afonso de Souza, who not merely gave office to unworthy favourites and relatives, but often sold it, so that returning rich to Portugal, he was welcomed by everybody, while the

[11] A province in North Portugal.

upright Jorge Cabral, returning without any loot, had no reward but in heaven. A new note is struck, however, when he attacks Portuguese policy towards the Indian states and people. Barros, Castanheda, Couto write unmoved about the assaults and descents upon coastal settlements. Correa, of one such raid says, 'And this was quite without point, for they were country folk who never went out to sea, nor did harm to anyone.' He denounces the impolitic injustice with which friendly rulers such as those of Melinde or Cochin have been treated, and bursts out, over the treatment of Cotiale, lord of Tanore, with 'This great friendship, which the Moor had for us, cost him the total destruction of his person and wealth, something which happens to all the Moors or Gentoos who risk our friendship.'

Correa, for all his personal faith, wrote an entirely secular account of Portuguese activity in Asia. Bocarro, for all his dubious religious past, wrote much more piously, and on occasion rivalled Muslim historians in his description of the infidel passing straight from the fires of a burning village to those of hell. But whatever his personal attitude to Indians as persons—and he usually called them blacks—he wrote when the Portuguese were on the defensive and facing defeat. He therefore saw the Asian powers, trained in the arts of war by the Portuguese, as in themselves a match for Portuguese India.[12] He therefore saw India as one country power among many, who must look to her alliances and rely more on diplomacy and cunning 'until of necessity we come to trust, as do the English and the Dutch, in more than the valour of spirit and arm'.

It must be regretted that these historians stuck so closely to their chronicle model, and that model the writings of Zurara and Ruy de Pina, rather than Fernão Lopes. But the tradition was strong, and three of them wrote under royal order for courts rejoicing in political expansion and for a nobility restored to influence by the long minority of Afonso V. The market aimed at was necessarily a limited one—indeed even Barros sold very slowly and very badly. Again three of our writers were themselves brought up in the palace, all but Couto were of gentle blood. It was therefore natural to place such emphasis upon the deeds of the fidalgo, so little on the activities of merchants, and the smallness of the Portuguese Indian world, which must have made the historian familiar with most of those he wrote about, gave importance to such individuals, their personalities, jealousies, and feuds. (Many of the Mutiny narratives have something of this same quality.)

Again, if we regret the absence of such matters as administration, the land revenue system of the Goa territories or Ceylon, the social life of the Portuguese in the East, missionary activity, and the details of that commerce which so long supported empire, we are in part regretting the loss of works which were written, Barros' *Geography and Commercial Handbook*, and that of Couto, or the relegation of some of these topics to separate works which still exist in manuscript such as Bocarro's large-scale survey. The historians make it clear, too, that they knew of Barbosa, Tomé Pires, Garcia da Orta, and the Jesuit writings—and spared duplication.

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[12] Couto had already attacked those who thought that in Asia the Portuguese had to deal with no more than naked niggers, armed with roasted sticks of wood, where in reality they were 'most powerful nations, politic, well trained in war, such as the Persians, Khurasanis, Mughūls, Deccanis and Habshis'.

Within their own sphere of interest their greatest fault, as historians, springs from their annalist method. They analysed each event, filled in the historical background of individual rulers or campaigns, but did not organize their study of causes and effects over the whole area and time. Their history is all action—and little reflection. But within their limits they were extraordinarily conscientious, much readier than most modern European writers to go beyond their own records to those of the native states, careful to check what they were told—Couto corrects Castanheda from Turkish and Arabic sources—and as a result, when modern scholars test their work, they emerge as both great and reliable historians.

14. DUTCH HISTORICAL WRITING ON SOUTH ASIA

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It is possible to divide historical writing in Dutch on South Asia into at least two broad periods: early historical writing up to about the middle of the eighteenth century, and later historical writing (i.e. during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries). This division is a natural one because the nature of historical writing differs radically in the two periods, historical writing in the modern sense being a nineteenth- and twentieth-century phenomenon.

In the first half of the seventeenth century there are several works such as the *Remonstrantie* of Van Ravestyn and that of Pelsaert, which are very important as sources for South Asian history. But they could hardly be considered in the category of historical works—as some have done—because they do little more than describe various interesting features of the political, social, or economic conditions obtaining at the time. The first published work which can make even a slight claim to be considered historical is *The Begin ende Voortgangh van de Vereenigde Nederlandtsche Geoctroyeerde Oost Indische Compagnie* (1646). It was an attempt at compiling an account of the 'beginning and progress' of the V.O.C. up to the 1640's by stringing together in some chronological order various journals, diaries, reports, and other such documents, and at times providing some introductions and connecting links between one document and another. It was a very crude attempt at a historical compilation; Baldaeus, and more particularly Valentyn, were to show the great possibilities of perfecting this method. *De open-deure tot de Verborgen Heydendom* (1651) by Abraham Rojernis was an attempt at describing and understanding South Indian Hinduism through the personal observation (during some ten years) of this Calvinist clergyman himself, and with the assistance of a couple of obliging Brahmins. This work too has not much claim to be considered really historical, but it was accepted by contemporaries and even till comparatively late times as a good historical study.

With the *Naauwkeurige Beschrijvinge van Malabar en Choromandel . . . en . . . Ceylon* (1672) of the clergyman Philippus Baldaeus we are on really firm ground. This voluminous work belongs to the best type of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historical works on Asia. Baldaeus knew Ceylon and Malabar at first hand for over a decade, and his accounts regarding those regions are fuller and more accurate than those regarding Coromandel, Gujerat, and the Mughal Empire in general. The work on Ceylon shows that he had access to some of the official correspondence of the V.O.C. He also appears to have utilized Portuguese sources and local historical traditions, both written and oral. Baldaeus did not confine his attention to Dutch activities only. He showed a keen interest in the histories of the indigenous peoples, even in the period after the coming of the Europeans. The emphasis was of course on political history. Matters relating to social, religious, and economic life were noted, but they were separated from the history of the people and compartmentalized in such a way that one felt that they were noted more for their curiosity-interest than for anything else. Baldaeus has been accused of plagiarizing from the work of his predecessors and convicted on that point. But allowance has to be made for the general practice of the time. Sometimes he gives a garbled version of a treaty or other document, and on occasion he is even found deliberately denying the truth.[1]

The *Op- en Ondergang van Choromandel* (1693) was the work of a Dutch physician, Daniel Havart, who spent some thirteen years on the Coromandel coast—not always in the capacity of a physician, sometimes even being employed as a cashier and storekeeper. He gives an account of conditions in the Dutch factories on the Coromandel coast. Apart from the fact that his writings touch on native life at various points, he also gives much information regarding the last kings of Golconda. He was a contempory or near-contemporary of many of the things which he describes and his account is often based on his own observations. The accuracy and the wide range of these observations and the cultured and rather critical mind which he brought to bear on his writings make Havart's work not merely an important historical source, but also a—for the time—noteworthy historical contribution.[2]

Much the same things could be said of François Valentyn's work on Coromandel, Malabar, and Ceylon (which is all part of the work: *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, 1724–6) as was said of Baldaeus' work. But amongst other things it should be noted that, in general, he carries the story further than Baldaeus, his account of Coromandel and, in some respects, of Ceylon, is fuller—due partly to his use of Havart—and also that Valentyn deals with Bengal, which Baldaeus practically ignored. He, too, uses diverse sources—Dutch, Portuguese, and indigenous—but, more often than Baldaeus, he lets the documents speak directly by his use of extensive quotations, summaries, or even full reproductions of documents. As is the case with Baldaeus also, one finds sometimes a confusion or abrupt breaks in the narrative. Valentyn, too, takes material without acknowledgement from previous works—not least from Baldaeus—and he consciously tries to mask the derivation. Also, he sometimes quotes documents or utilizes previous works in a very inaccurate manner. But one feels that Valentyn sometimes brings a more detached attitude than Baldaeus to questions in which Dutch and non-Dutch oppose each other. As Chaplain to the forces fighting Portuguese and natives in Ceylon and Malabar, and as Calvinist missionary trying to overcome the spiritual resistance of Roman Catholics, Hindus, and Buddhists, Baldaeus could probably look with less detachment on the events in this region than Valentyn, who was never there but spent his Eastern sojourn in the East Indies. Besides, judging from some of his fiery declamations, one feels that the soldier in Baldaeus was not much less than the missionary. With regard to the value of Valentyn's work, it may also be noted in passing that certain Dutch documents of the period are known only through reproductions or extracts given by him, the copies or originals being no longer extant in the Dutch archives. He also gives an invaluable and extremely accurate glossary of certain South Asian words and phrases which have important historical significance.[3] Finally, it may be said that, as present historical knowledge stands, his work and that of Baldaeus are indispensable for a study of many of the matters dealt with by them. The use which Dutch scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made of these works is good testimony to their importance.

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[1] Cf. K. W. Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon* (Amsterdam, 1958), pp. xiv–xv.

[2] At the beginning of his work Havart refers to his having utilized 'authentic evidence, old documents, trustworthy reports and his own experiences'. In one connection he refers to his attitude as being one 'without any prejudice, hate, envy or blind affection'.

Pieter van Dam's *Beschryvinge van de Oost-Indisch Compagnie*[4] is, unlike the works hitherto discussed, an official history, in that it was written by the chief legal and administrative official of the Company at the request of the Directors. It was to be kept as a secret document for private reference by the Directors of the Company alone; there was no idea of publication. In fact, though completed by 1701–3, it was published only in the second quarter of the present century. (It must, however, be noted that several writers like Klerck de Reus, H. Terpstra, and F. M. Mansvelt consulted this work in manuscript in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.) Van Dam gives much information regarding South Asia, even on matters having no direct relations to the V.O.C., as is the case, for instance, with much that he says about the Mughal Empire or other Indian states. His account is best when he deals with certain aspects of the V.O.C.'s activities, of which he had very close knowledge as a result of his association with the central administration of the Company (in the Netherlands) for about half a century. But, although there is a sort of official stamp on his work, it is not free from the type of defects found in the works of Baldaeus and Valentyn. Writers who have already used the *Beschryvinge* have had occasion to point out that there are many inaccuracies, even on matters

[3] See Goonewardena, op. cit., p. xv.

[4] In progress (The Hague, 1927–).

related primarily to the V.O.C. The editor of the work, Dr. Stapel, has often pointed out how Van Dam borrows freely from his predecessors without any acknowledgement. And although Van Dam used the official records of the Company, it is apparent that he did not digest the material properly: one could see from page after page of his work that he often merely reproduces word for word the *Generale Missiven* (a sort of annual report from Batavia).[5] But as was said regarding the work of Baldaeus and Valentyn, Van Dam's too is indispensable in the present stage of research—and where the original archival material is lost, his work will remain as the primary authority.

W. Damast van Limberger's *Beknopte Historie van de Voornaamste gebeurtenissen op Ceylon* was also an official history, not meant for publication. Van Limberger was the secretary to the Dutch central government in Ceylon and the history was apparently compiled in 1757 on the instructions of his superiors. However that may be, the work turned out has little relation to the archival documents. For the most part it is a rehash of what Baldaeus and Valentyn had written. For the period not dealt with by them, there is a sketchy and rather incoherent account obtained, it would seem, by a scissors-and-paste method of utilizing the records. In fact, of all the works mentioned so far, this is the least valuable today.

It may be pertinent at this juncture to make a few general comments[6] on some aspects of the early historical literature before passing on to the later. Practically the whole of South Asia is covered, with varying degrees of thoroughness, by these works taken together. The main emphasis, however, is on Malabar, Coromandel, and Ceylon—the principal centres of Dutch activity in South Asia. The period dealt with is practically confined to the seventeenth century. In general, the sources utilized by these writers are both European and non-European. There is noticeable a very great interest in various matters connected with the South Asian peoples, even in those which have no relation at all to Dutch activities. This is particularly true of the work of Baldaeus and Valentyn. Also noteworthy is the fact that attention was not confined to the political sphere. But the range of comprehensiveness of the interests did not, as already indicated, lead to any synthetic historical treatment. Various historical aspects were in effect compartmentalized. As regards the writers, they were, or had been, all Company's servants, and two of them wrote what can be called official histories. The fact that they had been Company's servants did not prevent some of them, like Havart and Valentyn, from criticizing the Company. Even Van Dam, though he often abused the Company's opponents, was at times severe in his criticism of its policy and even of its

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[5] Goonewardena, op. cit., p. xv.

[6] In this commentary the *Begin en Voortgaugh* is not taken into account, as its editor, Isaac Commelin, had so little to do with its contents.

Directors. The point of view, however, was almost always pro-Dutch and pro-Company, and opponents—whether European or not—of these two elements received little justice in these works. It is also of interest to note that, with the exception of Van Dam, all these writers had lived in the East, if not in South Asia, for a considerable time. Finally, as regards the reasons for their writing, some have already been indicated. A general motive applicable to Rogerius, Havart, Baldaeus, and Valentyn seems to have been the desire to satisfy the great curiosity which the seventeenth-century Netherlander had regarding the East. Another motive generally applicable to all was apparently that of satisfying the pride which the Netherlanders had in the achievements of the V.O.C. The hope of fame and of some financial reward was also in the background. Rogerius had the added motive of enabling his countrymen to develop arguments to combat the principles and practices of Hinduism, and thereby make conversions.

Between Limberger's work and the next one on South Asia, there is a gap of nearly one and a half centuries. This is partly explained by the fact that Dutch colonial writers have fought shy of taking up the eighteenth century for study, as they preferred the 'glorious period' of the seventeenth. Part of the explanation can be sought in the fact that some half a century after Limberger wrote Dutch territories in South Asia passed into British hands and therefore, as Colenbrander says, the Company's history in that region became 'dead history'.[7]

It was a doctoral thesis, *De Opkomst van het Nederlandsch Gezag over Ceilon* (1895), which revived some interest in the region once again. According to the writer, Willem van Geer himself, it was the desire to contribute something to the knowledge of a most important, but too little known, subject that led him to choose the theme of the rise of Dutch power in Ceylon. Apart from using the works of Baldaeus and Valentyn and the scanty material available to him from the Portuguese side, he consulted much of the archival material relating to the period covered by him—1638–45/46. But he overlooked some of the most important material, and sometimes he rendered his sources inaccurately or even completely contradicted them. Moreover, too great a reliance on the good faith of official versions of events and policies sometimes prevented him from grasping the truth. On the other hand, he brought a more critical mind to bear on his sources than all writers (Dutch) before, and most after him. He maintained a degree of objectivity which is all the more striking because few of those who avowedly used his work were able to retain it.[8]

In 1908 there was another work concerned with Ceylon. This was the ex-army officer George Nypels' *Hoe Nederland Ceilon Verloor*. Like so many of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Dutch (colonial) historical writers, he was also very much taken up with the idea of teaching lessons from history.[9] He makes a detailed analysis of the circumstances that led to the passing of Ceylon from Dutch into British hands at the close of the eighteenth century, and concludes by warning his countrymen not to let Indonesia be some day lost in the same manner as Ceylon. In point of historical value his work cannot bear comparison with Van Geer's.

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[7] *Koloniale Geschiedenis* (1925), i, 292.

[8] Goonewardena, op. cit., p. xi *et passim*.

De Vestiging van de Nederlanders aan de Kust van Choromandel, published in 1911, was a doctoral thesis, which marked the beginning of Dr. H. Terpstra's important contributions to the history of Dutch activities in South Asia. In 1918 he published *De Opkomst der Westerkwartieren van de Oost-Indische Compagnie*. Both these works were specialized ones: the first dealt with the settlement of the Dutch on the Coromandel coast and covered a period of about a decade (1603–12). The second was on the rise of the V.O.C. settlements in Surat—the centre for Dutch activity in Gujerat—and Persia, and Arabia; the period covered was 1601–24. Apart from showing his continued interest in Dutch activities in these regions by publishing a number of reviews and articles in the years subsequent to these early works, he published, in 1947, a short general survey of Dutch activities in seventeenth-century India entitled *De Nederlanders in Voor-Indie*. For these studies, he has utilized published Dutch and English sources and unpublished documents at The Hague archives. Like Van Geer, he was also primarily concerned with Dutch activities, but unlike the former, who took into consideration little beyond diplomatic and political history, Dr. Terpstra ventured successfully into aspects of social and economic history of the Dutch settlements. It might be added that another noteworthy feature of his writings is the discussion of the sources utilized.

J. Aalbers' *Rijcklof van Goens . . . en zijn arbeidsveld* appeared in 1916. Unlike the writings of the three previous writers, this work is woven round the theme of an individual, popularly considered by the Dutch to be of heroic proportions. But, fortunately, there is much more than an account of Van Goen's activities in the four years 1653–4 and 1657–8, because the author has a very accommodating conception of what is needed as introductory, explanatory, and complementary material for his main theme. His account of military and naval affairs appears wellnigh excellent, but when he deals with the history of the Dutch in Ceylon, for instance, he is extremely faulty, most so regarding the period before 1657. Although Aalbers utilized Van Geer's work for part of his historical sketch of the Dutch in Ceylon, he often drew conclusions which were not consistent with what the earlier writer had said. When he did consult the documents at The Hague archives, he consulted only a few of the important documents—mainly those which were directly relevant to Van Goen's activities. As a result, he could not arrive at a proper understanding of many important matters.[10]

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[9] Ibid., pp. 3, 145, and p. 3 n. 1.

[10] Ibid., pp. xii–xiii.

In a class by itself is D. M. G. Koch's *Herleving, Oorsprong, Streven en Geschiedenis der Nationalistische Beweging in Britsch-Indie*, published in 1920. It is, to my knowledge, the only historical work of any importance in Dutch on a 'non-Dutch' subject relating to South Asia. It is a 486-page (excluding two appendices) work on the Indian nationalist movement. It was written with the hope that it might help towards a better evaluation of the Indonesian nationalist movement, and be useful to both the Dutch Government and the nationalist leaders in Indonesia. The method of treatment and the contents of this book are most remarkable, if one takes into account the comparatively early date at which it appeared. The book is divided into two unequal parts, of which the first (containing only 156 pages) studies the background to the nationalist movement. It is interesting to note that to explain this background he deals with the following main topics—the history of India down to the complete conquest by the British (a brief survey), British land revenue policy and its consequences, industry, trade and commerce, education, government and administration, and finally the cultural renaissance, which he underlined heavily. It would take several pages to give a just idea of the comprehensive manner in which the subject is treated, but some idea can be formed from what has already been said, and also from what follows. While he recognizes the predominant role played by impersonal forces in the nationalist movement, he does not minimize the importance of personalities. He inserts photographic and pen-portraits of almost all the important nationalist leaders, and often makes relevant quotations from their speeches and writings. He appears to have consulted almost every book written in English on the subject by both British and Indians. He similarly consulted numerous reports and other documents, as well as newspapers in English—not excluding Besant's *New India*, Gandhi's *Young India*, or the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. Though he himself was an official (in Dutch service, it is true) he minces no words when he criticizes the bureaucracy in British India. Everything indicates that he consciously tried to view the whole subject from the inside, as it were. This led him sometimes almost to identify himself with the Indian nationalists and be as severely critical of British rule as they were. When, for instance, referring to the duty levied in the interests of Lancashire on Indian textile manufactures, he says: 'In no civilized country in the world was a policy such as this ever carried out', then he is in the garb of an extremist completely ignoring Dutch policy of no very different character. Although Koch's point of view is nearer the Indian than the British, it must be noted that he endeavours to be fair to both sides. For instance, referring to the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, he criticizes Gandhi and the 'Extremists' for refusing to co-operate in working out what he considered to be a really valuable and generous set of reforms. It is also very striking that while British writers of the time saw a discontinuity between ancient Indian history and the history of modern India, Koch was pointing out that this was a superficial view. 'The strength of the tendencies towards natural development in that indigenous society, with its fine civilization, its strong traditions, its indestructibly-powerful inner life, has not deserted it in the period of British rule also. However great the changes during the past one and a half centuries may have been, India remained in essence the same.'

Some three years after the publication of Koch's work there appeared H. T. Colenbrander's well-known *Koloniale Geschiedenis*. In the first volume of this general survey of colonial history, he devoted about forty pages to a study of British colonial history in India, and this study is largely indebted to Koch's work. Colenbrander, too, believed that the study of British colonial history in India would be of much use to the Dutch.[11] In the second volume of his work, when dealing with Dutch colonial history, he refused to consider the V.O.C.'s activities in South Asia because that was, as he put it, 'dead history'. Only in order to illustrate the losses which the Company suffered as a power through the rise of the English, would he make a couple of remarks on some of those activities.[12]

The idea so often expressed by Dutch writers that the V.O.C.'s activities in South Asia constituted 'dead history' did not deter N. MacLeod from publishing, in 1927, a two-volume history entitled *De Oost-Indische Compagnie als Zeemogenheid in Azie*, in which there is no distinction between 'dead' and 'living' colonial history. Very much under the influence of Mahan, MacLeod attempted to indicate the predominant role played by sea-power in the fortunes of the V.O.C. in Asia. He, however, broadened the scope of his work in such a way as to consider matters of trade when they had some general significance in relation to the Company's rule; to say something of the relations with native states and even something on the internal history of those states. Even though he confined his attention to a fifty-year period (1600–50), it was a formidable task to write on so many aspects because he took into the discussion some thirty to forty places with which the Company had relations of some sort or another. As a result, his work has an uneven character and the main concept of sea-power was not sufficient to give a unity to the work. On naval, and, to some extent, on military affairs, his account appears quite satisfactory, but on the other aspects of history, he is found quite inadequate and often inaccurate—if one may be permitted to generalize after a detailed consideration of what he says regarding Ceylon in a total of about thirty pages.[13] Nevertheless, one cannot help noting with some surprise that, considering the wide scope of his subject-matter, the degree of accuracy is as great as it actually is. Also, no reference to this work would be adequate without a remark on the great value of the large number of maps and sketches which he has provided.

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[11] p. 266.

[12] p. 292.

[13] Goonewardena, op. cit., p. xii.

In the same year (1927) as MacLeod's work, there was published the doctorial dissertation of Dr. W. Zwier, *Het Verdrag van 1766 tusschen de O.I. Compagnie en den vorst van Kandi*. 'Dead history' was once more raked up, in that the subject was related to Ceylon, one of the lost colonies. This small piece of work dealt primarily with the war between the Dutch Company and the King of Kandy during the years 1760–6 and the treaty which concluded that war. Not much new light is shed on the diplomatic or economic relations between the Company and the Sinhalese king, but military events are clearly narrated from the Dutch point of view. Like the previous doctoral theses, Zwier's too was largely based on the archives of the V.O.C. at The Hague.

In the third volume of the *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indie*, Dr. F. W. Stapel utilizes information from the works of Terpstra, Van Geer, and others including Van Dam, whose *Beschryvinge* he so ably edited, in order to give an account of Dutch activities in the seventeenth century in South Asia. In the course of this compilation certain inaccuracies have crept in and a few serious omissions have been made. But up to the present, this work rightly enjoys the status of being the standard work of reference on the general seventeenth-century history of the Dutch in South Asia. Volume IV of this same *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indie*, compiled by Dr. Godee Molsbergen, is generally recognized as being quite unsatisfactory. This was partly because he had hardly any secondary authorities to to go by and partly because he was writing during a period of illness.

Dr. N. J. Krom's biography of Governor-General Van Imhoff (published in 1941) has a few pages devoted to Van Imhoff's governorship of Ceylon—too few to require comment.

In 1943 there appeared Dr. M. A. P. Roelofsz's, *De Nederlanders Ter Kuste Malabar*, a detailed study in the tradition of Dr. Terpstra's early work. It covers Dutch activities in Malabar up to 1663. The author has tried to combine a sort of day-to-day narrative of the principal element—Dutch naval and military operations—with that of the rather subordinate element of trade, during this period. The work is, therefore, very detailed and, as the author herself admits, monotonous. But so far as the Dutch side of the story is concerned, it looks as if no fuller account than this could be given. The sources utilized are English and Dutch—primarily, of course, Dutch, and that too mostly archival material. Incidentally, this is the first Dutch work on South Asia which consciously takes into account the possibility of having South Asian readers and not merely Dutch and other Western.

It would now be worthwhile to consider some of the general features of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century works discussed above. These works, taken together, cover Dutch activities in almost the whole of South Asia. But there is a decided emphasis on some regions, particularly Ceylon, which was considered the most valuable of the Dutch possessions. As with the earlier writers, the concentration is almost entirely on the seventeenth century. Nypels, Krom, and Zwier do no more than touch on what were limited incidents in eighteenth-century history. Colenbrander touches on that period, thanks largely to Koch, who alone devoted much attention to nineteenth- and twentieth-century history. Unlike in the earlier period, the sources utilized are almost exclusively European. Only Koch makes use of some indigenous sources (though, of course, they were written in English). The writers are all, except Koch, almost exclusively interested in Dutch activities. And their attention was primarily on political and administrative history; occasionally some attention was paid to economic history. Only Terpstra shows noticeable interest in the society and culture of the Dutch settlements. A few of the writers are well-known academic men—Colenbrander, Terpstra, and Stapel. Nypels and MacLeod were, apparently, military and naval officers. Koch was an official and later a journalist and publicist. Dr. Roelofsz is an archivist. (Of the others, I have no information.) Some of the reasons for writing have already been indicated or implied. For instance, the very fact that a work is a thesis indicates one motive for writing. To all these writers there also appears to be an intrinsic interest in the subjects dealt with, particularly because of the element of national pride associated with the achievements of their seventeenth-century forefathers. (Koch's subject-matter, of course, makes him an exception to this.) Another motive found in most writers is that of teaching political and moral lessons from past history. This seems to be a very general consideration amongst Dutch colonial historians up to the present day. It was only five years ago that Professor Dr. W. Ph. Coolhaas —a well-known colonial historian, who has, however, not written much on South Asia—wrote emphasizing the need for emigrants from the Netherlands to know the overseas achievements of their forefathers so that they could emulate in the new lands the best that their ancestors had achieved despite all difficulties.[14] Closely associated with this idea of teaching lessons from history is the conception of seventeenth-century colonial history as an epic of great men. The generally accepted idea is that a succession of great men built up the greatness of the Dutch East India Company overseas, and that weak successors contributed to the decline. Sometimes the idea of great men moulding the history is fortified by the concept of a great people. For instance, referring to the loss of Brazil and Formosa, Dr. Stapel once wrote: 'The history of these two lost colonies proves that even in its age of greatest glory, a people has weak moments now and then.' (Van Leur's comment on this was: 'This is not history but national catechism.') Now, one of the interesting points of Dr. Stapel's statement is the passive role assigned to non-Dutch elements. It did not occur to him that, for instance, the strength and ability of the Chinese under 'Coxinga' had anything to do with the passing of Formosa into Chinese hands. Thus, one of the results of the extraordinary emphasis on Dutch elements, in the study of colonial history, was the overlooking or the neglect of the part played by indigenous elements.

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[14] See 'Van Koloniale Geschiedenis en Geschiedenis van Indonesie . . .' in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Deel 107 (1951), p. 160.

It is perhaps appropriate to conclude with some reference to some of the most striking features in the discussion of colonial historiography amongst Dutch scholars.

With but few exceptions—certainly Van Geer, Terpstra, Colenbrander, Stapel, Koch, and Roelofsz are not exceptions—the nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers referred to in the previous pages belong to what has generally been called the 'liberal school' of colonial historians, sometimes the 'Leyden school'. They appear proud—although their critics often say they are not—of much of the achievements of their predecessors, who built up and ruled a colonial empire; but they also saw sometimes much in past actions that they could not be proud of, and their historical writing showed this more or less clearly.

At least a quarter of a century ago, there began a strong reaction of a very conservative nature against this liberal (Leyden) school. The leading figure of this reaction was the well-known historian, Professor F. C. Gerretson. In 1925, he became Professor for the History of Netherlands-India and for Comparative Colonial History, etc., at Utrecht University. He began his attack on the liberal view of the culture system in Indonesia, and gradually the attack spread out against the treatment of the whole of colonial history by the liberals. According to the ideas of Professor Gerretson it was hardly possible to see anything bad in the history of Dutch colonial activities. In a work on Coen, he wrote in 1944: '. . . but a people has no past that cannot be reborn in some manner in its future—provided it remains mindful of its history. The supplying of that condition is the calling of the historian. (The purpose of) historical writing is: to make the future visible in the mirror of the past.'[15] In such a concept of history there was no place for the liberal school.

Professor Gerretson has, to my knowledge, not written on any aspect of South Asian history, but the application of his ideas can be seen from his writings relating to Indonesia. In the work on Coen, for instance, one finds him maintaining that 'Coen's true greatness appears precisely from the deeds on which the condemnation of his moral character has been hitherto based'.[16] (The deeds referred to are among others the Amboyna and Banda Islands incidents.)

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[15] *Coen's Eerherstel* (Amsterdam, 1944), p. 1.

[16] Ibid., p. 6.

While the school of Professor Gerretson, known as the 'Utrecht school', seems to have had a very important influence on the writings of Dutch colonial historians in Indonesia, its influence is less apparent regarding South Asia. The only work of note (on South Asia) which stands somewhat under this influence appears to be the brief sketch of colonial activity contributed by Professor Dr. W. Ph. Coolhaas to the *Algemeene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden.*[17]

Although the 'liberal' or 'Leyden school' and the conservative 'Utrecht school' criticized each other's attitudes to colonial history very severely, such criticisms appear mild compared to the fundamental criticism of the entire treatment of overseas history (by both schools) by J. C. van Leur. Van Leur, who published his thesis in 1934 on the early Asian trade,[18] paid most attention in subsequent writings to Indonesia, but his general criticisms of Dutch historical writing applies equally well to South Asia as to South-East Asia. One of his most important contentions was that the Dutch writers, without exception, looked at Asian history since the coming of the Europeans from an Europe-centred point of view. As he once wrote: 'The Indies-centred point of view is held for the preceding centuries, when Hindu civilization came from India and that of Islam from the world of the Caliphates. But with the arrival of ships from Western Europe, the point of view is turned a hundred and eighty degrees, and from then on, the Indies are observed from the deck of the ship, the ramparts of the fortress, the high gallery of the trading house.'[19] He stressed the fact that not only when dealing with general Indonesian history (or the history of South Asia, for that matter), but even when dealing with Dutch colonial history, sufficient attention should be paid to the indigenous elements—which did not play a passive role or merely provide a background for European activities.

Van Leur also pointed out that this Europe-centred viewpoint had come to affect, in some degree or other, historical writing even on the pre-sixteenth-century periods. West European history was looked upon as the centre of world history for the modern age as well as for the past, and everything was judged according to Western 'norms'.

Amongst his other important suggestions may be noted that relating to historical categorization. The categories 'Ancient', 'Medieval', and 'Modern' and such-like derived from West European history could not be satisfactorily applied to Asian history. He therefore suggested that the only universally-applicable categories were those which could be derived from sociology or economic history—as Max Weber had earlier pointed out.[20]

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[17] Cf. Part VI, pp. 152 f. and Part VIII, pp. 352 f.

[18] *Eenige beschouwingen betreffende den ouden Aziatischen handel.* Cf. also *Indonesian Trade and Society* (The Hague, 1955), pp. 3–144.

[19] Van Leur reviewing vols. 2 and 3 of F. W. Stapel (ed.), *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië* in *Tidjdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde,* Deel 79 (1939), p. 590.

Recognition of the value of his work came only after his death. The jurist-sociologist-cum-historian, Professor W. F. Wertheim, was the first to draw attention to the significance of Van Leur's work, and his writings show the influence of the latter's ideas. Amongst others who appreciated the contribution of Van Leur to historiography may be mentioned Dr. G. J. Resink and the leader of the so-called 'Amsterdam school' of history, Professor J. M. Romein.[21] In fact, one gets the impression that it is only in this, the most radical of Dutch schools of history (whether colonial or general), that Van Leur's work has received the most appreciation. Most other writers on colonial history seem to ignore his ideas, or find them useful only as catalytic agents.

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[20] Cf. *Eenige beschouwingen* . . . and 'Enkele aanteekeningen met . . . geschiedenis' in *Koloniale Studien*, xxi (1937), 651 ff.; also *Indonesian Trade and Society*.

[21] Cf. Wertheim, *Herrijzend Azie, opstellen over de oosterse samenleving* (Arnhem, 1950); 'Early Asian Trade—An appreciation of J. C. Van Leur', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, xiii, No. 2 (February 1954), pp. 168 ff.; Resink, 'Iets over Europacentrische . . . geschiedschrijving', *Orientatie*, No. 37 (October 1950), pp. 22 ff.; 'Passe-partout om geschiedschrijvers over Indonesie', *Indonesie*, vi (1952–3), pp. 372 ff. See also Resink, 'Zakelijkheid en Zekerheid in de Indonesische Geschied schrijving' in *Liber Amicorum; Weerklank op het werk van Jan Romein* (Amsterdam, 1953).

15. FRENCH HISTORICAL WRITING ON EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES IN INDIA

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It is necessary to explain at the outset that the object of the present paper is only to review in a general way the nature and extent of French historical writing on European, mainly French, activities in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No attempt is made to give an exhaustive bibliography of French published works on the subject, only the more important ones have been noticed. The paper is divided into three parts, corresponding to the three periods of French activities in India—1664 to 1742, 1742 to 1763, and 1763 to 1792. In each part the principal works on the period are first reviewed, and then the particular aspects of the subject which have not drawn the attention of French historians have been indicated. That will show the gaps still left to be filled up by later historians.

French historical writing on European activities in India started really from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, after the establishment of a new Eastern empire, and nearly a hundred years after the failure of the first bid for such an empire. Although the French had made serious efforts in the eighteenth century to achieve political power in India, their ultimate failure made them lose all interest in reconstructing the history of their Eastern ventures. Moreover, for nearly a hundred years after the outbreak of the Revolution, the French were much too occupied with their problems in Europe to think of turning back to a chapter which seemed to have closed for ever. It was only the success of their second colonial venture in the East in the last quarter of the nineteenth century which fired the imagination of Frenchmen and revived in their minds memories of the achievements of their countrymen in India a century earlier. After many years of oblivion, the efforts of the French East India Company, the sustained and constructive work of François Martin and Dumas, the political genius of Dupleix, the heroic struggles of Lally, and the brilliant exploits of Bussy and de Suffren, appeared in a new light as deserving grateful remembrance by their countrymen. From that time started earnest efforts on the part of French historians to delve into past records, which had till then remained forgotten and buried in the archives, in order to construct a detailed history of the French in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The influence of the newly-won Eastern empire on the revival of the historian's interest in the events of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is reflected clearly in the Preface to *L'Inde Française avant Dupleix* by H. Castonnet des Fosses, one of the earliest works of the modern period of French historical writing on India (Paris, 1887). 'Before 1870 France held only the fourth position among the Colonial Powers. To-day she is trying to establish an over-seas empire in Indo-China, and by her new acquisitions she comes immediately after England and above Holland. It is not for the first time that we are establishing settlements in the Far East. . . . More than two centuries earlier our ancestors had first turned their attention to the Far East . . . This period of our history in that part of Asia is yet little known. Still it is of a living interest. . . . We have felt that it would be of great interest to make this part of our Colonial history known at a time when we see before our eyes the beginnings of a French Indo-China. It is with that object that we publish *L'Inde Française avant Dupleix*.'

As the search for the forgotten history of the eighteenth century continued, there was a growing realization of the significance of the political conceptions of Dupleix and his compatriots and of the narrow margin by which they had missed the prize of an Indian Empire, which was snatched from their grasp by the English. This realization was particularly brought home to the French by the work of an English historian, Colonel G. B. Malleson, whose *History of the French in India* first appeared in 1867 and was translated into French in 1873. Malleson not only wanted to be fair to the defeated rivals of his countrymen, he even attempted to show that the defeat was due not to the superior genius of the victors but to unfavourable circumstances, including accidents. 'As we contemplate, indeed, the great achievements of France on the soil of Hindustan; as we read the numerous examples of the mighty conceptions, the heroic actions, the mental vigour, and the indomitable energy displayed there by her children, we cannot but marvel at the sudden destruction of hopes so great, of plans so vast and deep-laid. There may be, indeed there always are, many excuses for ill-success. . . . It is not that all the genius, all the strong character, all the valour are on the side of the conquerors. Genius, indeed, has been compelled to succumb to a combination of incidents apparently insignificant, and impossible to have been guarded against.'[1]

Views like these deeply influenced French historical thinking. The realization that their countrymen had once played a brilliant role in India, had fought for an empire, and had reached within an inch of success, gave a new incentive to French historians to turn to the forgotten records of the period and reconstruct the story of their exploits. The struggle for empire was no doubt lost, but recounting the story would at least show the keenness of the contest and the value of the prize. French historical writings on the events of the eighteenth century were tinged with a sense of regret at

[1] Malleson, *The History of the French in India* (new ed., London, 1893), pp. 2–3.

the slipping away of such a valuable prize as the Indian empire. Recounting the story of the exploits of the French in India would at least be a partial consolation for the loss suffered. J. Barbier concludes his history of the Compagnie Française des Indes thus: 'The success of the English Company and the victories of Clive make us realise what a brilliant role would have been played in the Indies by the French Company, if the means at the disposal of Dupleix had been adequate to sustain his conceptions. Unfavourable circumstances, resulting from an unhappy war, the unconcern of the Royal administration and the general lack of understanding of colonial questions, have caused us the total loss of an empire. The enormous increase in power and prosperity which the possession of the Indies has given to England permit us to assess to-day the full extent of this loss for France.'[2]

Although French historical writing on European activities in India may really be dated from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it should be noted that there was an earlier period, about the middle of the eighteenth century, when some efforts were made to give a connected historical narrative of the operations of the French East India Company. It was perhaps due to a sense of elation at the consolidation of the French position in India under Dumas and the brilliant opportunities held out by the policy of Dupleix. Success or the prospect of success is a natural incentive to the writing of colonial history. One of the earliest works of this period was the *Histoire Générale des Voyages* by Abbé Prévost.[3] It was not a work of history proper, but a mere compilation in a condensed form of accounts of voyages to the East Indies published earlier. Another work of the period was by Abbé Guyon: *Histoire des Indes Orientales anciennes et modernes.*[4] It was in the main an eulogy of Dupleix, with some account of the operations of the Compagnie des Indes. Dufresne de Francheville's *Histoire de la Compagnie des Indes*[5] was also not a connected history, but a mere collection of some private memoirs and laws and edicts relating to the constitution and privileges of the Company. Of a similar nature, but much more comprehensive, was the work of Dernis: *Recueil ou collection des titres, édits, déclarations, arrêts, règlements et autres pièces concernant la Compagnie des Indes Orientales de 1664 à 1750.*[6] Dernis was in charge of the Company's archives and thought it worth while to publish all the official papers relating to the constitution, privileges, regulations, and trading operations of the Company. But although the work of Dernis was thus a mere collection of documents in print, at the beginning of each volume there is a short history of the events of the period covered by it.

Entirely different in nature was the work of Abbé Raynal, first published in

[2] *Revue Historique de l'Inde Française*, iii, p. 96 (Paris and Pondicherry, 1919).

[3] 16 volumes published in Paris, 1741–61; 3 supplementary volumes published at Amsterdam, 1761–70.

[4] 3 volumes, Paris, 1744.

[5] Paris, 1746.

[6] 4 volumes, Paris, 1751–6.

French in the early 'seventies and translated into English by Justamond in 1776. His four monumental volumes, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, have a much wider sweep, and review the trading and colonizing activities of all the European nations from the end of the sixteenth century to the revolt of the English Colonies in North America. The nature of the work, however, is not that of simple history of trade and colonization, but of a treatise of political philosophy, belonging to the French philosophical school of the eighteenth century. Much of the work is thus encumbered with philosophical observations. The author starts with a definite notion about the close connection between liberty and commercial prosperity, and comes to the conclusion that the most successful colonial power will be the one which upholds the principles of liberty and democracy. About the means by which the French could recover their lost position in India after the disasters of the Seven Years War, the author observes that the French should eschew a policy of aggression and appear as the protectors of Indians against English tyranny. 'Then the French, considered as the deliverers of Indostan, would emerge from that state of humiliation into which their own misconduct had plunged them. They would become the idols of the Princes and peoples of Asia, provided the revolution they had brought about was to them a lesson of moderation. Their trade will be extensive and flourishing so long as they know how to be just. But their prosperity would end in some fatal catastrophe, should an inordinate ambition prompt them to plunder, ravage, and oppress.'[7]

After this brief period of French historical writing on India, there was an almost complete blank, until the creation of a new Eastern empire in the last quarter of the nineteenth century revived the interest of French historians to turn to the activities of their countrymen in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the earliest historical works of this period was *Louis XIV et la Compagnie des Indes Orientales de 1664* by Louis Pauliat.[8] Based on unpublished documents in the Archives Coloniales, this work traces the history of the French Company established by Colbert for the first ten years, 1664 to 1674, with a brief account of the earlier Companies. The book would have been of great value as a piece of historical research on the beginnings of the French East India Company but for the rather narrow object which prompted the author to write it, namely, to vindicate the policy and actions of Louis XIV. Pauliat begins with an admission that 'it would be inexcusable on our part to wish to assume the task of defending Louis XIV',[9] but that is exactly the objective he has kept in view throughout his book.

The work of H. Castonnet des Fosses, *L'Inde Française avant Dupleix*, which appeared in 1887, was, on the other hand, an attempt to write history in an objective way. It is a not very scholarly work based on original materials, and there are instances of gross factual inaccuracies which show that the author depended for the most part on secondary sources and did not care to verify his statements from original records.[10] Yet the work is undoubtedly of a high quality, as an attempt to give an unbiased and objective review of the development of French trade and settlements in the East before the time of Dupleix. The author has merely stated facts without attempting to give his judgements or to draw conclusions. But here and there the reader may find out his views, expressed in a few sentences. For example, he criticizes the attempt to colonize Madagascar[11] and the capture of St. Thomé by de la Haye in 1672.[12] His main attempt, however, is to show how the position of the French in India had been firmly laid by Martin, Lenoir, and Dumas, and that a continuation of their policy would have led to fruitful results.

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[7] Vol. I, p. 503.

[8] Paris, 1886.

[9] Avant-Propos, p. vi.

The rising interest in the activities of the French in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was marked by the appearance in quick succession, at the beginning of the present century, of three works on the French East India Company, all bearing the stamp of earnest historical research. The first was H. Weber's *La Compagnie Française des Indes*, which came out in 1904. In one volume Weber attempted to trace the whole history of the French activities in the East from the time of Henry IV to the end of the eighteenth century, based largely on original documents in the different archives and published contemporary works. Weber's main emphasis is on the organization of the Company and its trading operation rather than on the development of the French settlements in India and the stirring political events of the eighteenth century. On the whole, Weber has given a quite satisfactory and critical examination of the policy of the French Government, the points of weakness of the successive French Companies, and the causes of the ill-success which attended the efforts of the French in India.

The second work was the *Histoire de la Compagnie Royale des Indes Orientales (1644–1719)* by Jules Sottas, published in 1905. As Sottas explains in the Preface, he was drawn to the subject by sheer curiosity, after having read an old book, published in 1721, by one Grégoire de Challes, *Journal d'un voyage fait aux Indes Orientales par une escadre de six vaisseaux commandez par M. Du Quesne.* His interest in the eastern ventures of the French being roused, he was attracted to a study of the French East India Company, established in 1664, not only from published works but also from the original documents preserved in the Archives du Ministère des Colonies.

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[10] In p. 133 he states that François Martin was with de la Haye's expedition to Ceylon. It is obvious that he did not read carefully Martin's *Mémoires*. Again, in pages 139 and 148 he states that Martin went back to France after the capture of Pondicherry by the Dutch in 1693 and returned to India in 1699 after the conclusion of peace. As a matter of fact, Martin left France in 1665 and never saw his country again.

[11] p. 71.

[12] p. 115.

The work is divided into three parts, the first and the third giving a history of the Company and the second containing a summary of the *Journal* of Challens. The concluding chapter gives an interesting résumé and a critical analysis of the achievements of the Company. A very useful part of the book is a detailed scientific account of the method of ship-construction and navigational technique and ideas of the seventeenth century.

The same ground was covered by Paul Kaeppelin in his *La Compagnie des Indes Orientales et François Martin*, which appeared in 1908. But Kaeppelin's work is more thorough and comprehensive and based entirely on original sources. As a work of laborious and painstaking research, it is still the best history of French trade and settlements in India from 1664 to 1719. It is sometimes assumed that only dramatic political and military events deserve the attention of historians. So Kaeppelin is somewhat apologetic about writing a book of 673 pages on the activities of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales, which after all did not achieve much tangible result. Thus in his Preface he pleads that it would at least contribute to a better and a juster appreciation of the great events of the eighteenth century.

After giving an exhaustive account of the organizational changes and financial difficulties of the Company and of the development of its trade and settlements in India, Kaeppelin has provided us in his concluding chapter with a masterly assessment of the achievements and failures of the early period of French activities in India. 'Thus the Company after fifty-five years of its existence had not succeeded in laying down a solid foundation for the French in India or even in establishing a regular commerce, and its activity, far from occupying the whole of this period, had been on the contrary only intermittent.'[13] Then he analyses the causes of this failure—the rigid control of the State, depriving the shareholders of any independence or initiative; the protectionist policy of the Government, which hit the most profitable branch of the Company's trade; the lack of capital necessary for sustained commercial activity; and the European policy of Louis XIV, involving continuous wars for nearly half the period of the Company's existence.

As to results achieved, there were two only—the establishment of settlements at Pondicherry and Chandernagore, and the adoption of certain definite political ideas, resulting from contacts with Indian Powers and with European nations having trading settlements in India. Martin had advocated a policy of acquiring territorial possessions in India, by conquest from other European Powers, and by intervention in the chronic quarrels among the Indian Powers. Martin himself had followed the policy of intervention in the early days of the establishment of the French at Pondicherry, but the Mughal conquest of South India in the closing years

[13] p. 645.

of the seventeenth century rendered a continuation of that policy impossible. 'It was necessary to wait for the dissolution of that empire before it was possible for the French to think once more of following an Indian policy, of which François Martin had given the first expression and the earliest examples on a theatre so restricted and with such limited resources.'[14]

One of the principal sources of information about the early period of French activities in India was the diary of François Martin, *Mémoires sur l'établissement des colonies françaises aux Indes Orientales*, preserved in the Archives Nationales. The diary comes to an abrupt end in 1694, although there are two fragments covering the period February 1701 to January 1703. The special interest of the diary lies in the fact that it was written from day to day, at the same time as the events narrated took place, although the final copy was the result of careful revisions at later dates. The diary first attracted the attention of Pierre Margry in the latter part of the nineteenth century, who copied the whole of it himself with a view to publication. His death cut short the plan of publication, and his copy of Martin's *Mémoires* remained preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale until about half a century later, the plan was executed by Alfred Martineau. Martineau's draft was copied from Margry's manuscript and later checked by a scrutiny of the original preserved in the Archives Nationales. By publishing Martin's *Mémoires* in extenso[15] Martineau has rendered a signal service to students of history in throwing open a valuable source of information on the activities of the European nations in India in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Henri Froidevaux, who had earlier published the *Mémoires de Bellanger de Lespinay* (1895) and *Les Débuts de l'occupation Française à Pondichéry* (1897), has written a very interesting biographical sketch of Martin and an able summary of the course of events narrated, divided into three parts and given as an Introduction to each of the three volumes of Martin's *Mémoires*.

The interest roused by Martineau's publication in the career and work of the founder of Pondicherry was marked by the appearance in 1946 of an interesting and well-written biographical work by Lt.-Col. Henri Carré, *François Martin, Fondateur de l'Inde Française (1665–1706)*. It is not a scholarly work but is meant for general readers, and its purpose is to make known to the present generation of Frenchmen the patriotic services of François Martin, almost forgotten by his countrymen. After Weber and Kaeppelin, the work of reconstructing the history of the French East India Company was taken up by J. Barbier, whose *La Compagnie Française des Indes* appeared in 1919.[16] It is not an original work, but, as Barbier himself admits, a summary of the facts contained in earlier works on the subject. Nevertheless, it gives in a brief compass of 96 pages a very detailed account of the organizational changes, financial difficulties, and trading operations of the French Company from 1664 to 1770. In that way, it is a very informative treatise.

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[14] p. 651.

[15] 3 volumes, Paris, 1931–4.

[16] *Revue Historique de l'Inde Française*, iii (1919), pp. 1–96.

On the early period of the French in India four other works deserve special mention. *Le Vieux Pondichéry*[17] of Marguerite V. Labernadie is a most graphic account of the development of Pondicherry from a mere fishing village to the capital of the French possessions in India through numerous vicissitudes of fortune. It is written in a very pleasant, almost journalistic style, but is at the same time a product of laborious research, based largely on original documents. What gives the work its special value is the description of the social life at Pondicherry in those early days in great and vivid detail, which brings before the reader's eye a living picture of the city in making. It is to be noted, however, that Madame Labernadie describes the life, dress, manners, amusements, furniture, and houses of the European community only and not of the large Indian community, whose contribution to the making of Pondicherry was certainly not negligible.

P. Olagnier's *Le Gouverneur Benoist Dumas*[18] is also a very ably-written monograph on an illustrious Frenchman, who in many ways was the precursor of Dupleix and raised French power and reputation in India to a degree not known before. The period of the administration of Dumas is generally treated by French historians as a mere prelude to the glorious days of Dupleix. But how unjust it is to that great Governor will be evident if one considers the great expansion of French trade in the East under Dumas, the acquisition of Karikal, the reconquest of Mahé, the beginning of the policy of intervention in the politics of South India, and the high reputation he achieved for French names by taking up a firm attitude against the Maratha conquerors of the Carnatic in order to save the family of an old ally. In fact, it would have been more fortunate for France if Dupleix had the same determination combined with wise prudence as Dumas.

Alfred Martineau in his *Les Origines de Mahé de Malabar*[19] has traced the history of that settlement from 1720 to 1738. Like all Martineau's works, it is a very well-documented book. Martineau has utilized, besides the *Mémoires du Chevalier de la Farelle sur la prise de Mahé, 1725*,[20] all relevant records in the Archives of Paris, Pondicherry, and Madras. One would wish that Martineau had continued his history of Mahé for the next two periods as well, from 1739 to 1761 and from 1765 to 1793, although in his Introduction he has given a very brief sketch of the whole.

In reviewing the nature and extent of French historical writing on the pre-Dupleix period, it may be noted that the period has attracted adequate attention on the part of French historians, and several scholarly and well-documented works have been produced. But the earlier part, from 1664 to 1719, has been studied more thoroughly than the later part, from 1719 to 1741, and there is yet room for thorough and careful researches into the history of the administration of Lenoir and Dumas, for a better understanding of the period which followed. Then again, while Pondicherry and Mahé have got their historians, Chandernagore has yet to find one. A connected history of Chandernagore, on the model of Madame Labernadie's *Le Vieux Pondichéry*, will certainly be very interesting reading. Thirdly, French historians have not paid adequate attention to the part played by Indians—traders, weavers, agriculturists, artisans, soldiers, and sailors—in the development of the French settlements in India. There is scarcely any attempt to depict their mode of life, economic conditions, and attitude towards the European administration.

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[17] Pondicherry, 1936.

[18] Paris, 1936.

[19] Paris, 1917.

[20] Paris, 1889.

II

In comparison with the early period, the period of Anglo-French rivalry in India under Dupleix and Lally has received more attention from French historians. The reason is obvious. The dramatic interest of political and military events is always more likely to capture the imagination of historians than the slow and plodding work of the early pioneers who built up French trade and settlements in India. It is not surprising, therefore, that the historical works produced on the nineteen years of the second period far outnumber those produced on the earlier period, comprising nearly three-quarters of a century. It may be noticed again that of the historical works produced on the second period, nearly all deal with Dupleix—his policies, achievements, and failures, while only a few are devoted to separate studies of La Bourdonnais, Bussy, and Lally. Dupleix has been more fortunate about the extent of the historian's attention than his three contemporaries, who also played important roles in the thrilling drama of the Anglo-French rivalry in India and, under ordinary circumstances, could legitimately lay claim to a proportionate share of the historian's attention.

The reason for this disparity of treatment on the part of French historians is, perhaps, that their attention was first drawn to a study of the activities of their countrymen in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries less for their historical interest than as a result of the rising spirit of colonial expansion in France in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Naturally, in such a setting, the thoughts of Frenchmen turned, more by sentiment than by historical interest, to the policies and activities of a great man, who first conceived the idea of building up a vast Eastern empire and who, according to them, failed only because he was let down by an unimaginative Company and a corrupt Government. Few could soberly reflect whether the Company and the Government had really adequate resources, financial and military, to sustain the ambitious plans of Dupleix, and few would pause to think how much the failure of the French was due to the wrong moves and miscalculations of Dupleix himself. Thus, the rise of a new spirit of colonial expansion in the latter part of the nineteenth century led to the development of a sort of 'Dupleix Cult', which soon found votaries among historians also. While English historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries uniformly paid handsome tribute to the great Frenchman, the historians of his own country scarcely remembered him till the rise of the 'Dupleix Cult', significantly heralded by the erection of statues at Pondicherry (1870) and Paris (1883).

To be sure, the swing of opinion in favour of Dupleix started earlier, as reflected in the work of Barchou de Penhoën, *Histoire de la Conquête de L'Inde par l'Angleterre*, and also in the monumental work of Henri Martin, *Histoire de France*, both written about the middle of the nineteenth century. Barchhu de Penhoën was one of the earliest of the nineteenth-century French historians who felt that it was high time for France to acknowledge the greatness of one who had been eulogized so much by the historians of his enemy country. Thus, in the Preface to his work on the English conquest of India he wrote, 'We say with some amount of pride that the English empire, which was created by the successive talents of Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley, originated in the genius of Dupleix.'[21]

Martin in his *Histoire de France* went further in his appreciation of the genius of Dupleix and in his condemnation of the Company and the Government which let him down. 'The genius of a Richelieu had matured in a Factory. Dupleix was the first to realise the inevitable result of the contact between the static societies of the East and the progressive societies of Europe, which gain in strength by virtue of the rapidity of their movement according to a law quite similar to the physical law of gravitation; he had seen Asia, like America and like the whole world, destined to submit to the law of the European races. . . . Dupleix judged India destined to be conquered, not by other Asians, like those who had ravaged her before, but by Europeans; among the European powers, Portugal had fallen and Holland was declining; there remained only France and England. Dupleix was determined to give India to France. . . . His plan was as much prudent in respect of means as audacious in respect of the final objective.'[22]

For the failure of Dupleix to achieve this ambitious project, Martin put the entire blame on the French Government and the Company. 'Asia would have been ours if, with Dupleix and Bussy in India, we could still have Louis XIV and Colbert at Versailles, or if we could have only Law! But in place of Louis XIV and Colbert, we had Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour and the inept merchants who directed the Company of the Indies.'[23] . . . 'There is not a single instance in modern history of a nation being betrayed to this extent by its own Government.'[24] Martin finally concludes: 'The new France has not yet paid her debt to this illustrious victim of the monarchy! Dupleix awaits yet a monument in this country which he had wanted to adorn with a world-empire; history, at least, has at last done its duty in proclaiming him one of the greatest men and best patriots France ever had, a man of the race of Richelieu and Colbert.' He was born either too late or too early; he should have been living in 1660 or 1792, in an epoch of glorious organization or in one of supreme danger and supreme devotion.[25]

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[21] *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Inde par L'Angleterre* (second edition, Paris, 1844), vol. I, p. xiv.

[22] *Histoire de France* (fourth edition, Paris, 1862), vol. 15, pp. 307–8.

Historical judgement in France, which was thus turning in favour of Dupleix from about the middle of the nineteenth century, reached the extreme point of a blind eulogy in the last quarter of the century, with the rise of a 'Dupleix Cult' among a new generation looking forward once more to the prospect of an Eastern empire. It was this period which first saw the appearance of numerous biographies of Dupleix (with no similar works on La Bourdonnais, Bussy, and Lally), not with a view to present historical facts but really only to glorify one who first conceived the idea of a French Eastern empire. All his virtues were recalled, with no reference at all to his faults and wrong judgements. His admirers sought to show how easy of execution the project of Dupleix was, and that the only factor responsible for its failure was the neglect of the French Government and of the Company. The earliest French biographies of Dupleix were those by Henri Bionne (1881), Tibulle Hamont (1881), and A. Deloffre (1883). These panegyrical works do not deserve any serious consideration. All of them start with a fixed objective, namely, to show how great a man Dupleix was, and how his plan, so easy of execution, miscarried only because of the faults of others. Just a few lines from Bionne's book may be quoted by way of illustration. Discussing the initial success of Dupleix in the Carnatic and in the Deccan, Bionne observes: 'Masters, in this way, of the Deccan and the Carnatic, of which the princes, under the powerful direction of Dupleix, became the agents of France, we were assured of seeing our supremacy definitively established, while the English, relegated to their small factories, would not have counted in the Peninsula at all. The vast conceptions, which could not be grasped by our rulers and the Messieurs of Paris (the Directors of the Company) and which Dupleix came to achieve without their support by means of his own resources, were to lead to the fall of the Governor and to disappear with him.'[26] Again, on the failure of the French enterprise he observes, 'Dupleix, in establishing a vast colonial empire in India, had to fight against the ideas of centralisation which prevailed at Versailles and fell at last a victim to vile intrigues, crushed by the combined efforts of the ruthless advocates of centralisation, who dreamt of ruling the world from their small chamber, without caring for anything else but their own passions, interests and fixed ideas, to which, they imagined, all men and all things must conform.'[27]

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[23] Martin, *Histoire de France*, vol. 15, p. 458.

[24] Ibid., p. 464.

[25] Ibid., p. 465.

[26] Bionne, *Dupleix*, i, 120.

In 1888 appeared two further works on Dupleix, one by Clarin de la Rive: *Dupleix, ou les Français aux Indes Orientales*, and another by Castonnet des Fosses: *La Rivalité de Dupleix et La Bourdonnais.* The first is scarcely a work of history but a mere sentimental effusion. Clarin de la Rive says about Dupleix, 'A man, far in advance of his times to be understood and having against him the crime of being a genius . . . had conceived a project, audacious and sublime! He wanted, with the feeble forces put at his disposal by the Company, to give France, his beloved country, this vast empire of India, which became later the prey of England and the most precious jewel of the British Crown.'[28] Referring to the order of recall in 1754, the admiring biographer observes that Dupleix obeyed it 'without thinking for a moment to revolt, which was easy. . . . While giving up power he exclaimed *Vive le Roi.*'[29] Warming up still further, he says, 'While the Company of the Indies has disappeared forever, tarnished with an indelible disgrace, because of its criminal and shameful manœuvres, the noble figure of Dupleix, emerging from the penumbra of history, appears on the other hand as a vision—pure, radiant and in all the effulgence of beauty.'[30]

Castonnet des Fosses wrote his book 'to pay homage to the genius and character of Dupleix, who is one of the men of whom France has the greatest reason to be proud'.[31] At this time the 'Dupleix Cult' had gained such a hold over the minds of even sober historians that the least criticism of the great hero appeared intolerable. Voltaire, one of the greatest French thinkers of the eighteenth century, wrote an account of the Anglo-French wars in India in his *Précis du Siècle de Louis XV.* While he was not unduly harsh in his judgement on Dupleix and even expressed his admiration for many of his qualities, he criticized Dupleix at times for some of his actions. Referring to the destruction of Madras in 1746 in violation of the terms of capitulation, he wrote, 'This barbarism inflicted a good deal of harm on innocent colonists without doing any good to the French. The ransom which was to be collected was lost and the French name was held in horror in India.'[32] For making such a statement, Castonnet des Fosses thought it fit to condemn Voltaire in these words: 'We should not be surprised at this calumny on the part of Voltaire, who has always been remarkable for his lack of patriotism. In taking the side of England against France and in abusing Dupleix, the flatterer of Prussia and the insulter of Joan of Arc, is in his proper role. Thus, we have good reason to be surprised at the statues which are now being erected in his honour and which constitute a shame for our country.'[33]

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[27] Ibid., p. 12.
[28] Op. cit., p. 2.
[29] Ibid., p. 3.
[30] Ibid., p. 5.
[31] *La Rivalité de Dupleix et La Bourdonnais*, p. 3.
[32] *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, vol. 22, p. 259.

Another work on Dupleix belonging to this period is by Julien Vinson, *Les Français dans l'Inde: Dupleix et La Bourdonnais.*[34] Vinson was an eminent Orientalist, but he also could not escape the patriotic exuberance of the time. In his introduction he observes, 'One cannot but bitterly deplore the foolishness of the ministers of Louis XV, who prevented France from playing the glorious role to which she seemed destined. India specially escaped our grasp in the most lamentable manner; there is no doubt that placed in our hands for a century, she would have made much more progress than she has done under the control of a trading, pietist and monarchical England. . . . The French, more generous, and less convinced of their infallible superiority, have left everywhere the deepest and the most lasting impressions. . . . After all, it is yet pleasant for us to note that we had first shown the way, that England only followed and imitated us, and that Clive, his companions and his successors had profited from the experience of the old governors of Pondicherry and continued to their advantage the work begun by Dupleix.'[35]

We need not refer to all the biographies of Dupleix of this period. Of them only two are of sufficient importance to be mentioned, one written by Guénin and the other by Cultru. Guénin fell in line with the other biographers and his main object was to exalt Dupleix. Cultru, on the other hand, was highly critical of Dupleix, and even went to the extreme by declaring that Dupleix planned nothing and foresaw nothing.[36] It marks the beginning of the decline of the 'Dupleix Cult' in France, and for nearly twenty years Dupleix did not find any new biographer. When that phase of indifference passed, there began a new attempt to give a picture of Dupleix in the proper perspective, and to assess his qualities on the basis of the cold facts of history, presented by records preserved in the Archives of Paris, London, Pondicherry, and Madras.

It is interesting to note that this attempt was first made by a successor of Dupleix as Governor of Pondicherry after a lapse of a century and a half—Alfred Martineau. Martineau's monumental work on Dupleix is in five big volumes, and their publication was spread over more than a decade, beginning from 1920. The first four volumes deal with Dupleix in India, while the fifth, though outside the series proper, covers the last years of Dupleix in France and his proceedings against the Company.

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[33] *La Rivalité de Dupleix et La Bourdonnais*, pp. 62–63.

[34] Paris, 1894.

[35] Vinson, *Les Français dans l'Inde: Dupleix et Labourdonnais*, Introduction, p. ii.

[36] P. Cultru, *Dupleix* (Paris, 1901), p. 371.

Martineau's work is based on unpublished records, little of which had been noticed by earlier biographers. His method of treatment is also interesting. He rarely makes any comments or attempts to force any conclusions on the readers, but gives long extracts from the records to enable the readers to form their own judgements. As he himself has expressed it, 'The role of a historian is not to impose his judgement, but to provide the public the means to pronounce it on the basis of the documents cited.'[37] This method of giving long extracts has no doubt made the volumes somewhat bulky, but at the same time it has preserved the objective character of the narrative. Another thing to notice is that although Martineau's aim was only to write a biography of Dupleix, his work is in a real sense a comprehensive history of the French in India from 1722 to 1754, which fully justified the title he has chosen, *Dupleix et l'Inde Française*.

Martineau's aim was to get away from the influence of the legendary reputation of Dupleix and to give an objective picture of events, revealing the real man. As he himself explains, 'We do not, in fact, have any intention of expounding here some kind of a thesis on the important work of Dupleix, either to extol him like Guénin, or to criticise him like Cultru; there is no man, however great, who does not have his weaknesses, and if the psychologist could penetrate with certainty into the thoughts of statesmen, there would be little, very little indeed, in their actions which would appear to him inspired by high ideas, particularly by foresight and plans for the future. Chance and self-interest guide them more than one would like generally to confess. Dupleix did not escape this common law. Coming to India with the sole object of making money, he was led unexpectedly by the course of events and a sort of financial necessity to a policy of territorial expansion, which he had not foreseen earlier, and even the vaguest idea of which he did not form for the first time till twenty-seven years after his arrival in the peninsula. . . . It is therefore the history of a *man* that we are writing and not that of a demi-god.'[38]

At the end of the first volume Martineau has drawn a fine picture of Dupleix, the man. His intellect was sharp, but he lacked in the art of finesse. He was a man of extreme susceptibility. 'The least resistance exasperated him, and then a mere discussion of his ideas he considered as an attack and even as a personal injury.'[39] He pursued his victims with sarcasms and diatribes, sparing not even his superiors. Finally, in his struggle with the English after 1749 and down to his departure from India, 'One cannot be certain that his personal rivalry with Lawrence and Saunders did not have as much influence on the course of events as the ambitions of Chanda Sahib and Muzäfferjung; during his office in Bengal he allowed himself to be guided by other sentiments. He had full confidence in his neighbours of Calcutta and entertained the best relations with them. He did not understand that the most loyal friendships subsist only by mutual recognition of their rights and that the day when one of the parties pursues only his own interests, the whole arrangement is upset, often at his own expense.'[40]

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[37] Martineau, *Dupleix et l'Inde Française*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1927), Introduction, p. vii

[38] Ibid., vol. 1 (Paris, 1920), Introduction, p. vi.

[39] Ibid., pp. 495–6.

Martineau has analysed well the motive which prompted Dupleix to conceive the idea of a colonial empire. 'Constantly embarrassed in his trading operations by the delay or insufficiency of funds coming from France, he came slowly to the idea that the only means to get rid of such embarrassments was to find money in India, without waiting for funds from Europe and without having to seek the assistance of bankers. That made it necessary to have a fixed territorial revenue, the collection of which could be assured only by the exercise of a political power. Thus was first conceived and later developed more fully in the mind of Dupleix the idea of creating for our advantage a sort of colonial empire in India, where we would be practically the masters under the authority, more nominal than real, of Indian princes, who would owe their throne or their security to us. But this idea, which was to change the face of India and in a certain measure that of the world, was not in his mind at any time before the year 1749 or perhaps before 1750.'[41]

Discussing the causes of the failure of Dupleix, Martineau has rightly emphasized the wrong judgement and blind obstinacy of Dupleix himself. By frittering away resources in the expedition against Trichinopoly and by dividing the French forces between the Carnatic and the Deccan, Dupleix compromised the security of the empire he wanted to create. 'No doubt, at the beginning, the error was legitimate; at that moment all kinds of hopes were permissible; but in the later stage, when came an unending series of misfortunes and disillusions, it became evident that the substance was being sacrificed for the shadow. The blindness or the obstinacy of Dupleix was the principal cause of his fall.'[42]

Martineau has offered an interesting explanation for the wave of sympathy for Dupleix among Frenchmen. By its refusal to recognize that whether he had deceived himself or the Company about the practicability of his project Dupleix had at least exhausted all his own money for the interests of France, the French Company 'plunged him into a state of extreme distress and gave him the halo of a martyr, which contributed not a little to inspire the pity, the sympathy and finally the gratitude of the posterity'.[43]

Martineau's idea about Dupleix is brought out most poetically in his description of the statue of Dupleix at Pondicherry. 'While contemplating on this face, cast in bronze, one is struck, if the resemblance be exact, by the expression of a strong will contained in its features. The lower jaw, very distinctly revealing, is the sign of a strength, a little brutal. The eyes look at the horizon, as if they seek less to penetrate than to dominate it. . . . If the statue could come to life, there would descend from it a man with a heavy and vigorous gait, stamping the earth as if he wanted to conquer it. This man . . . would jostle and bully with a sullen and morose air, all those who would obstruct his way. He would not tell them his name, it was for them to know it. He would demand from them respect and, if necessary, would impose it. Less anxious to please than to be obeyed, he would brutally force submission on all those who would not have faith in his genius. Then one night the man would disappear in the darkness and his name would slowly pass into a legend.'[44]

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[40] Ibid., pp. 499–500.

[41] Ibid., vol. 2 (Paris, 1920), Introduction, p. ix.

[42] Ibid., vol. 3, p. 418.

[43] Ibid., Introduction, p. vii.

After Martineau's monumental work, the most interesting study of Dupleix is by G. Jouveau-Dubreuil. This book, under the simple title of *Dupleix*, was first published at Pondicherry in 1941 and was dedicated to the memory of the great man on the occasion of the bicentenary of his elevation to the dignity of a Mughal Nawab. In 1942 the same book, with some changes in language, was published again in Paris under the title *Dupleix ou l'Inde Conquise*, on the occasion of the bicentenary of Dupleix's assumption of office as Governor of Pondicherry. The work is the result of a very intelligent scrutiny of all relevant records, both in French and in English. Jouveau-Dubreuil did not attempt to write a complete biography of Dupleix and came down to 1750 only. His object was simply to analyse the system of 'Dupleixian Nababism', as he calls it. He wanted to establish his thesis that all that Dupleix did in India was not the result of chance or inevitability of circumstances but that of a plan thought out carefully long in advance and forming a well-integrated system, that would fit in perfectly with the pattern of Indian politics in the eighteenth century. As against the common opinion that Dupleix was led by the course of events, particularly after 1749, to adopt a policy of intervention in the quarrels of the Indian Princes and to enter the field as an auxiliary, Jouveau-Dubreuil asserts that not only was the policy formed long in advance but that also in the contests in south India Dupleix fought not as an auxiliary but as a principal, as a Nawab of the Mughal Empire fighting against other Nawabs for increase of territory and power. Jouveau-Dubreuil's contention is that Dupleix was animated throughout by his ambition to play the role of an Indian Nawab rather than that of a loyal Frenchman looking to national interests. From this the author draws an interesting conclusion: 'Europeans have not conquered Persia or China or Japan, but they have conquered India; why? Because, in India there had been a Dupleix. India was conquered not at all by arms, but by 'Nababism', that is to say, by the genius of one man. The conquest of India, an event of World importance, may be explained by the study of a single character.'[45]

[44] Ibid., i, 500–1.

[45] *Dupleix ou l'Inde Conquise*, p. 132.

In contrast with Dupleix, Bussy had less luck in catching the historian's eye. In all the works on the Anglo-French rivalry in India Bussy is treated merely as an able lieutenant of Dupleix, with hardly any claim to a separate study. All the appreciation he has received is only for his military qualities and ready obedience in carrying out the instructions of his chief. It hardly struck anyone that Bussy also could have his own ideas about French colonial policy in India or that he could have a separate identity from Dupleix. How far this has influenced historians will appear from the fact that no biography of Bussy was written till 1935. Martineau's *Bussy et l'Inde Française*, published in that year, is the first separate study of a man who played such an important role in the history of French colonial enterprise in India. In the case of Bussy the neglect of historians is equalled by the neglect of his countrymen at Pondicherry, where he breathed his last in 1785. His tomb there was disinterred so many times that nobody can be certain today about where he was first buried. Till very recent times even his name was wrongly spelt on the tombstone. As Martineau has expressed, 'A strange destiny for a man who held for an instant in his hands the fate of India and whose name yet remains popular in the legends of the country. A profound subject of melancholy for the historian, who does not understand that the memories of men whose lives serve as examples do not always end in an apotheosis. And Bussy . . . was in our colonial history a man truly great, the greatest in the *ancien régime* and occupying yet in the new régime a highly honourable place. He was certainly not superior to Dupleix in the boldness of conception, but he was far above him in good sense and judgement, without which even the loftiest ideas are often nothing but the unfortunate product of imagination.'[46]

Martineau was the first to bring out Bussy from the position of secondary importance to which he had been relegated by earlier historians. At the same time his conception of Bussy's greatness was based on a standard different from the traditional one. While earlier historians extolled Bussy for his military genius in subjugating the Deccan with a small French contingent, Martineau based Bussy's claim to greatness on his uncommon tact and diplomatic ability, which alone really preserved French influence in the Deccan against heavy odds. 'Bussy thus takes his place . . . among the great figures of the eighteenth century, less as a soldier than as a diplomat. . . . In a Hellenic Pantheon Pallas Athéné, the goddess of wisdom and of war, would have claimed him as one of her most perfect disciples.'[47]

Martineau also brings out that Bussy had no genuine interest in the task assigned to him by Dupleix and that his idea of a sound colonial policy was entirely different from that of his chief. In his celebrated letter of 1753 he represented to Dupleix 'that our settlements on the coast were sufficient for our commerce and that therefore it was useless and perhaps dangerous to remain in the Deccan, where we would run the risk of being obliged to take sides in the quarrels of the country princes to the detriment of our commerce'.[48] Bussy believed that the real strength of a country lay in a homogeneous territory, sufficiently large to resist attacks, anything beyond which 'is a luxury and sometimes a danger'.[49]

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[46] *Bussy et l'Inde Française*, p. 443.

[47] Ibid., p. 448.

Martineau does not hide his preference for the policy of Bussy to that of Dupleix, although he admits that the policy of Dupleix 'was entirely the modern theory of colonisation, a theory which triumphed after his death, and one can quite understand why it found so many apologists later'.[50] But he asserts that at the time that it was conceived by Dupleix 'no policy was less inopportune. . . . It would have been much more useful to retain in Europe all our land and naval forces, and it is perhaps because we dispersed them to Canada and India, particularly to Canada, that we lost the Seven Years War. At that time . . . the primary interests of France required her to confine her attention to Europe. When the house is on fire, one does not think of the stable; it is Voltaire who was right.'[51]

Even less fortunate than Bussy in drawing the historian's attention was Mahé de la Bourdonnais, whose constructive achievements in the Isles of France and Bourbon and naval and military exploits, particularly the capture of Madras, are forgotten in the heat of his quarrels with Dupleix and specially because of the accusation of having sold Madras to the English for a bribe. It deserves to be noted that an eminent contemporary like Voltaire considered him as a great man and expressed his appreciation in the highest terms.[52] His quarrel with Dupleix arose fundamentally from his agreement to allow the English to ransom Madras, and in that he simply carried out the express orders of the Ministry. It was this quarrel which was responsible for all the charges brought against him after his return to France, and although he was finally acquitted, the success of Dupleix in India prevented a swing of public opinion in his favour. Moreover, the suspicion of having accepted a bribe lingered on, to tarnish the memory of La Bourdonnais. English historians, in particular, in their zeal to pay homage to the genius of Dupleix, kept alive the suspicion against La Bourdonnais. The final blow was struck by Malleson, who confidently asserted that he had discovered papers in the India Office which proved conclusively the charge of bribery against La Bourdonnais.[53]

Since then all French historians accepted it as a conclusive proof, until the myth was exploded in 1905 by E. Herpin in his *Mahé de la Bourdonnais et la Compagnie des Indes*. Herpin admits in his Preface that he was induced to write the book to vindicate the honour of La Bourdonnais. For this purpose he procured from the India Office the documents which Malleson claimed as furnishing a conclusive proof. On an analysis of these documents, which Herpin reproduces in his book, it will be clear that they do not in any way prove the charge against La Bourdonnais and that Malleson certainly did not scrutinize them. Along with these documents, Herpin reproduces all the relevant papers connected with the trial of La Bourdonnais and also a short analysis of the *Mémoires* of La Bourdonnais. Anyone who reads this well-documented and ably-written book will come away with the impression that Herpin has fully succeeded in vindicating the position of La Bourdonnais. But in making that attempt, Herpin had necessarily to focus attention on the intrigues and jealous manœuvres of Dupleix, revealing all the weak traits of his character.

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[48] Ibid., p. 445. [49] Ibid., p. 450. [50] Ibid., p. 449. [51] Ibid., p. 450.

[52] Précis du Siècle de Louis XV—*Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, xxii, 257–60.

[53] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India* (second edition, London, 1893), Appendix A, p. 588. The same Appendix contains Malleson's reply to Sir George Birdwood's refutation of the charge of bribery against La Bourdonnais.

It is interesting to note that a decade earlier Julian Vinson had attempted, through a translation of extracts from the diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, to do justice to the services of La Bourdonnais without disparaging the conduct of Dupleix. 'The conclusion may be drawn from all that has been published, and the documents which follow also justify it, that Dupleix and La Bourdonnais had received contrary instructions from the Company and the Ministry; that they had, besides, their own ideas; that both of them were nearly equally self-willed, arbitrary, and authoritative; and finally . . . we see in their quarrel once more the rivalry between the civil authority and the military command or that between the army and the navy, which had so often proved injurious to our colonial expeditions.'[54]

Of all those who played a distinguished role in the history of the French colonial enterprise in India, undoubtedly the most tragic figure was Comte de Lally, a brave, honest, and patriotic man, who sacrificed everything in the service of France and, as a reward, was hounded to death by an ungrateful nation. Among French historians Voltaire was the first to be touched by the tragedy of Lally's career and wielded his powerful pen to vindicate the reputation of a great man, so misunderstood and maligned by his contemporaries. In his *Fragments sur l'Inde*[55] Voltaire described the career of Lally with the vividness and pathos of a tragic drama. He diagnosed, more correctly than most French historians of later days, the real cause of Lally's failure in India, apart from his lack of resources and the hostility he encountered from the Company's authorities at Pondicherry. 'The real cause was the same as in other parts of the world: the superiority of the English fleet, the carefulness and perseverance of that nation, its credit, its ready money, and that spirit of patriotism, which is stronger in the long run than the trading spirit and the greed for riches.'[56] According to Voltaire, the execution of Lally 'was one of those murders which are committed with the sword of justice'.[57]

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[54] *Les Français dans l'Inde: Dupleix et La Bourdonnais* (Paris, 1894), Introduction, p. lxx.

[55] It was written originally as an appendix to the *Histoire du Parlement de Paris*. The *Fragments sur l'Inde* has been translated into English by Mrs. Freda Bedi (Lahore, 1937).

But Voltaire was alone among his contemporaries in his sympathy for Lally. Even when the unjust judicial sentence on Lally was reversed about twenty years later, French historians still refused to study his career dispassionately and to give him his due. Thus we find even an eminent historian like Henri Martin writing of Lally in the following terms: 'Instead of sending back Dupleix or choosing Bussy, the Government sent Comte de Lally-Tollendal, son of an Irish refugee, a very brave officer, but devoid of all political sense, completely ignorant of Indian affairs and too obstinate and ill-tempered to take the trouble of learning them. His system was that of La Bourdonnais, made worse by ignorance and obstinacy; to confine himself exclusively to the destruction of the English settlements, with a brutal distrust for all diplomacy and for all Indian alliances. To such a man had been given the resources which Dupleix never had at his disposal from 1747 to 1754.'[58] But even Martin admitted that Lally did not deserve the death-sentence passed on him. 'The real criminal on whom posterity would fasten the responsibility for the loss of India was not Comte de Lally but the King who had ordered his death.'[59]

Although Lally is generally considered as representing a negation of all that Dupleix stood for, curiously enough the first detailed and well-documented biography of Lally was written by the same historian, Tibulle Hamont, who had only a few years earlier written a panegyrical biography of Dupleix. In his Preface to *Lally-Tollendal*[60] Hamont explains in a poetic way why the great hero had not found a historian and what induced him to write his biography. 'Was it because the life of this man is a drama full of rapturous and exciting elements, with tragic turns of fortune and claps of thunder? Was it because it is a romance, with the charm of the melancholy and sadness which is associated with heroes vanquished by the fatality of circumstances? There is, in fact, all that in his history; but that is not at all the reason which has induced me to write this book. This history is not merely the history of a man, it is specially the history of a period . . . a century when fortune had given us writers, philosophers and generals, had given us everything except a government.'[61]

The last sentence gives the whole tenor of Hamont's thesis. He admits that Lally's career was a total failure, but he attributes the cause of that failure entirely to the blindness and incapacity of the Government. He makes this distinction between Dupleix and Lally: 'Dupleix, he is the soul of the nation, he is the spirit of light; Lally, he is the reflection of Versailles, he is the spirit of darkness.'[62] It is interesting to note here Hamont's assessment of the strong and weak points of Lally's character. 'He lacked in the most elementary political sense: he showed himself a man without organising capacity and a general without broad views; he had given proofs of obstinacy, malice, jealousy, fits of passion, weakness and self-deception; but at the same time he had displayed a solidity of bravery, ardour and love for the public good.'[63] Hamont seeks to defend Lally's conduct only on the ground that his hands were tied by the strictest instructions of the Government, instructions which were fundamentally wrong and shortsighted. Then he adds, 'The gravest fault of Lally was that he did not understand the Indian situation and that he obeyed the orders of the Government. That was his real crime, one which history has the right to recall and judge.'[64]

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[56] *Fragments on India*, p. 74. [57] Ibid., p. 86. [58] *Histoire de France* (Paris, 1878), xv, 538.
[59] Ibid., xv, 572. [60] Paris, 1887. [61] Hamont, *Lally-Tollendal*, Preface, p. i. [62] Ibid., Preface, p. ii.

In reviewing French historical writing on the period 1742 to 1763, we may notice that it is mostly biographical, rather than in the nature of a comprehensive history of the entire period. No doubt some authors, like Martineau, have attempted to deviate from the strict line laid down for a biographer and to cover a wider field, but even then the main emphasis is on individuals. In the second place, while French activities on the Coromandel coast, in the Carnatic, and in the Deccan, have been exhaustively discussed, events in Bengal and on the Malabar coast have not received a proportionate share of the historian's attention. Thus the storm that was brewing in Bengal about the middle of the eighteenth century, the establishment of the English power, and the destruction of the French position in that province, have scarcely been noticed by French historians. Finally, in dealing with the dramatic events in the Carnatic and in the Deccan, French historians have studied very carefully French and English records, but have left completely unexplored one valuable source of information, the Persian records in the Hyderabad Archives, which would have thrown light on the Indian side of the picture.

III

The third period, from 1765 to 1793, that is, from the restoration of the French settlements following the treaty of 1763 to their last capture by the English on the outbreak of the Revolutionary war, has received scant attention from French historians. Indeed, there is not a single book in French giving a comprehensive history of the whole period. The nearest approach to such a work was first attempted by an Englishman, Malleson, whose *Final French Struggle in India and on the Indian Seas* (London, 1878) was first translated into French in 1911 by the Société de l'Histoire de l'Inde Française, Pondicherry. But Malleson's work does not cover the entire

[63] Ibid., pp. 317–18.

[64] Ibid., p. 321.

period, nor is it a connected history either. Even that ground has not been covered by any French historian.

French historical works on this period are mostly biographies. A very notable contribution in this sphere has been made by Martineau. His Introduction to the *Journal de Bussy*, 1781–83,[65] and one chapter in *Bussy et l'Inde Française* cover the period of Anglo-French contest in India from 1781 to 1783; Martineau has given a detailed account of French policy and of the course of events during that period, based on original records. But his attention is always on Bussy, and his object is to clear Bussy of the charge of cowardice and pusillanimity levelled against him by Malleson. Not that he shields Bussy in a partisan spirit, and no one can fail to appreciate the impartiality of his judgement. The charges against Bussy by his critics are based on a lack of understanding of his ideas about territorial conquests in India and of the difficulties he had to encounter during the expedition of 1781–3. It was this lack of understanding which led them to imagine a wide gulf separating the early and the later career of Bussy, the first deserving the highest praise and the second the strongest condemnation.

Martineau has established from a careful study of Bussy's letters and *mémoires* that he always considered the policy of territorial conquests in India impractical and unwise, and that his supposed timidity in 1783, in contrast with the dashing spirit he had shown in his younger days, was really due to the changed political situation in India and the inadequate resources with which he landed on the Coromandel coast. As Martineau has put it, 'It is thus in the spirit of a duty to be performed than of a confidence or even of a hope of winning laurels that he embarked for India.'[66] On arrival in India Bussy himself wrote, 'I would not have undertaken the re-establishment of our nation after peace with as few troops as are now at my disposal for waging war.'[67] In Martineau's estimation Bussy was greater as a diplomat than as a soldier and he points out that whatever ill-success Bussy's expedition might have met with, in his correspondence with the country Powers 'one would find the same diplomatic qualities which he had shown in the Deccan thirty years earlier'.[68]

Another important figure of the time, Bailli de Suffren, who played such a glorious role in the Anglo-French contest in India, has found numerous biographers. For introducing new tactics in naval combats, tactics which were later adopted by the English Admiral, Nelson, with such resounding success, de Suffren occupies a unique place in the history of the French navy. That is why many authors who were not otherwise interested in the French colonial enterprise in India also wrote about him. Among the early biographers of de Suffren may be mentioned Hennequin (*Essai historique sur la vie et les campagnes du Bailli de Suffren*), Cunat (*Histoire du Bailli de*

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[65] Pondicherry, 1932.

[66] Op. cit., Introduction, p. xviii.

[67] Ibid., p. 323.

[68] Ibid., Introduction, p. xxii.

Suffren), and J. S. Roux (*Le Bailli de Suffren dans l'Inde*). In 1888 was published a very valuable document, *Journal de bord du Bailli de Suffren dans l'Inde, 1781–1784*, lying till then unknown in one of the small Archives of France.[69] It is the most truthful day-to-day account of de Suffren's expedition. In 1948 appeared a very interesting biography of de Suffren, *Suffren et ses Ennemis*. The author, La Varende, belonging to a family one of whose members had killed de Suffren in a duel, writes, 'Of his enemies, I am one. I have been brought up in a feeling of hatred and admiration for Bailli, and it is for me a singular sensation to write the history of a man whom I do not love.'[70] Nevertheless, his whole book is an expression of the highest appreciation for de Suffren's naval genius.

One noticeable feature of all the works on de Suffren is that although they are very thorough and well-documented while dealing with the tactical innovations and naval operations of de Suffren, they are not on solid ground while dealing with the operations of the French army on the Coromandel coast. The consequence is that, puzzled by 'the contrast between the victories of de Suffren and the almost complete sterility of the results'[71] in restoring French fortunes in India and not finding any ready explanation, the biographers of de Suffren put the entire blame on the army command. Bussy, in particular, has been condemned in the severest language, which anyone having a better acquaintance with the facts of the situation would say was wholly undeserved. We may quote only two passages from Roux. Referring to Bussy, he says, 'The old governor of the Deccan, the military genius of Salabet, the illustrious lieutenant of Dupleix, was now an old man, gouty and worried, ignorant of the new politics and of the true situation of the belligerent powers; his talents and his proverbial enterprise had been lost during a long repose of 22 years in the enjoyment of his immense riches. . . . The vanity of this General . . . was bound to have grave consequences which even the genius of de Suffren could not always remedy.'[72] Again, 'Instead of following the counsel of Bailli de Suffren and of his experienced officers who advised him to boldly take the offensive . . . Bussy, resuming the old Oriental practice, kept himself invisible in his tent like a rich nabab. What a contrast in the eyes of our soldiers between this indolent conduct of the Marquis and the indomitable activity of de Suffren!'[73] Admiring biographers are often inclined to paint all others in black in order to make their own heroes shine all the more by contrast.

While the period from 1781 to 1784 has been treated in detail by the biographers of Bussy and de Suffren, the next period, from 1785 to 1793, has been treated only partially by Edmond Gaudart and Marguerite V.

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[69] Archives du Departement des Alpes-Maritimes.

[70] p. 3.

[71] J. S. Roux, *Le Bailli de Suffren dans l'Inde* (Marseille, 1862), Preface, p. i.

[72] Ibid., p. 177.

[73] Ibid., pp. 184–5.

Labernadie. In his *Correspondance des Agents à Pondichery de la nouvelle Compagnie des Indes avec les Administrateurs à Paris,*[74] Gaudart has written a long introduction, giving a detailed history of the new French Company founded by Calonne in 1785. It is interesting to read the chequered history of the Calonne Company, which revived French trade and commerce in the East to an extent not known before and might have led to permanent and far-reaching results but for the outbreak of the French Revolution. In 1790 the Company lost its trading monopoly and in 1793 it was suppressed altogether by the National Convention.

Madame Labernadie's work, *La Révolution et les Etablissements Français dans l'Inde, 1790–1793,*[75] is not a mere collection of dramatic episodes connected with the revolutionary activities in the French settlements in India, but an attempt at writing a comprehensive and connected history of the French in India from 1785 to 1793. The work is based almost entirely on the records in the Pondicherry Archives, and it is an interesting example to show what a wealth of material lies there, ready for use by a historian. One great merit of Madame Labernadie is her brilliant style. While she deals with the little-known and really insignificant revolutionary episodes in the different French settlements, she leaves the impression of a vivid and fascinating drama. But one thing about her attitude towards sharing the fruits of the Revolution between the French and the Indian inhabitants deserves to be noted. Frenchmen in the few tiny and scattered settlements in India played the Revolutionary drama on the Paris model. They sought to establish liberty, equality, and fraternity, but only for themselves and not for the Indian inhabitants, who were not allowed to participate in the movement and were relegated to the position of passive spectators. As a justification, she says that European ideas are not applicable to Indians. 'Truth, which is sometimes stopped by our little Pyrenees, cannot proceed so far as to cross the Himalaya.'[76] A little later she says, 'Let us have some indulgence for those who bore, so far away from the mother country and so courageously against all odds, what Kipling calls the white man's burden.'[77]

For the rest, French historical writing on this period consists of biographies of some of the most well-known French adventurers in the service of the Indian Princes. The presence of well-organized French contingents in the service of the Indian Princes strengthened the latter to resist the expansion of the English power and kept up a hope in the French official circles that some day these contingents could be utilized to organize a concerted attack on the English. To that extent, the careers of the French adventurers have a special interest, beyond the appeal of the romantic episodes of their personal lives. In spite of this special interest, however, only a few of these adventurers have found biographers in France. On René Madec there are two biographies, one by Emile Barbé (Paris, 1894) and the other by Albert La Bail (Paris, 1930). On de Boigne also there are two biographies, one by Saint-Genès (Poitiers, 1879) and the other by Maurice Besson (Chambéry, 1930). Perron has found only one biographer, Alfred Martineau (Paris, 1931). But equally eminent persons, like Gentil (leaving aside his own *Mémoires*), Raymond, de Lallée, and many others, who played an interesting role in the chequered history of the period, have not been fortunate enough to find separate biographers.

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[74] Pondicherry, 1931.

[75] Pondicherry, 1930.

[76] Op. cit., p. 331.

[77] Ibid., p. 343.

Of the biographical works mentioned above, one deserves special notice. Emile Barbé's *Le Nabab René Madec* is not the history of an individual but rather a history of French diplomacy in north India during the period under review, based on original records. Madec's ambitious project of an alliance with the Mughal Emperor and procuring from him the cession of the province of Sind caught the imagination of Chevalier, Governor of Chandernagore (1767–78), who in more favourable circumstances would have outshone Dupleix in diplomatic ability. It was through the efforts of Chevalier that the project engaged the serious attention of the French Government for a quarter of a century. It was not altogether abandoned, even after Bussy condemned it as absurd and chimerical, and the influence of Madec's project is discernible in Napoleon's despatch of a mission to Persia under General Gardanne in 1807–8.

There is only one book in French, Maurice Besson's *Les Aventuriers Français aux Indes (1775–1820)*,[78] containing a collection of brief accounts of most of the French adventurers in India. It is a very ably-written book, based on original documents. But Besson seems to over-emphasize the historical role of the French contingents in the service of the Indian Princes. There was really not much ground to hope that these French contingents could have influenced the policies of their masters and helped the restoration of French fortunes in India by building up a formidable anti-British coalition. Apart from the historical role of the French adventurers, Besson is full of sympathy for them for the romance and colour in their lives. Thus he says with some regret, 'The time of adventure having definitively ended in India, the partisans disappeared, and with them disappeared a little of the picturesque, much of the romantic and a perfume of heroism mixed with the marvellous.'[79]

In reviewing French historical writing on the last phase of French activities, we notice, in the first place, the absence of any comprehensive and connected account of the entire period, from 1765 to 1793. This has been rather unfortunate and has resulted in burying in oblivion an important chapter of the history of the French in India, from the restoration of the French settlements in India in 1765 to their capture by the English in 1778 during the war of American Independence. The zeal and enterprise shown by Law de Lauriston and Bellecombe at Pondicherry and by Chevalier at Chandernagore to restore French fortunes in India have remained totally unknown. The reconstruction of a connected history of this period is not at all difficult in view of the mass of materials available in the Archives of Pondicherry and Paris.

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[78] Paris, 1932.

[79] Op. cit., p. 246.

In the second place, there are in these Archives hundreds of long *mémoires*, dealing with plans for a revival of French political influence in India. The *mémoires* had been submitted by all sorts of persons; Governors of Pondicherry and Chandernagore, like Law de Lauriston, Bellecombe, Chevalier, Souillac, and Conway; diplomatic agents, like Montigny at Poona; and French adventurers in the service of the Indian Princes, like Gentil, Madec, Visage, Modave, Raymond, and others. Many of these plans were certainly utopian, but many others had a solid basis. In any case, a systematic study of these political and military *mémoires* is well worth the trouble, and would indicate at least the optimism and enterprise among the French, even after the disasters of the Seven Years War, for a revival of their lost position in India. Emile Barbé has covered the ground only partially, his attention being mainly confined to the project of René Madec, and there is yet room for a comprehensive and careful study of all the projects during the whole period, from 1765 to 1793. Finally, no detailed study has yet been made of French relations, during this period, with Hyderabad, Mysore, and the Maratha empire, based on French, English, Persian, and Marathi records. Such a study is badly needed to fill up an important void in French historical literature on the period under review.

16. DANISH HISTORICAL WRITING ON COLONIAL ACTIVITIES IN ASIA, 1616–1845

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The Danish overseas contact with the Asiatic peoples commenced with the establishment of an East India Company in the year 1616. Just as the Dutch by the end of the sixteenth century had taken from the Portuguese the secret of the sea route to India, so the Danes at the beginning of the seventeenth century sought assistance from the Netherlands. Dutch influence, however, was not confined solely to the technical aspects; financially, too, the Dutch were involved in the Danish company. A noticeable change in this situation did not occur until 1732, when the East India Company was reorganized under the name of The Danish Asiatic Company. Up to 1732 the Danish East Indian trade was an unstable enterprise with periods during which the company was deeply in debt and had ceased to trade. During these periods the company's people in India were left to themselves, and as country-traders they did not always enjoy the best reputation. Ceylon, the Coromandel coast, and Java were among the first areas in Asia with which the Danes got acquainted. Especially the Coromandel coast became of importance, as around 1620 the Danes took a lease of Tranquebar from the governor of Tanjore. Tranquebar remained a Danish possession until 1845, when together with the other Danish possessions in India it was sold to England. During the 1620's and 1630's factories were established at a number of other places in Asia—the Danes continued to follow in the wake of the Dutch—but apart from the factory at Bantam it was not a matter of a permanent stay. During the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the company obtained a foothold in Bengal and from 1755 possessed a factory at Frederiknagore or Serampore, and from 1773 a factory at Patna. During the same period a number of colonization attempts were carried through in the Nicobar Islands. With other Asiatic countries there were from the first period of the company trade expeditions to Persia and Siam, and we know that in 1637 the Danish king granted to a Copenhagen merchant permission to trade with China and Japan. Whether the permission was used, however, is unknown. In 1674 a ship was sent from Tranquebar to China on the company's account, but not until after 1730 does the direct trade with China commence. The direct traffic soon developed to become the dominating factor in the trade connection between Copenhagen and the Far East.

This is briefly the chronological and geographical frame of the Danish colonial activity. This provides the basis for a treatment of Danish historiography. For the sake of brevity I shall group the works into the following subjects: the voyages, the mission, the Company, the history of the Danish possessions, and lastly, the few Danish contributions to the history and civilization of the indigenous peoples.

The Voyages. Measured by a Dutch or British standard the literature on Danish expeditions across the ocean is very modest. The earliest contribution is a topical pamphlet giving a brief account of Admiral Ove Gjedde's expedition to India in 1618; much more comprehensive is the Icelander Jón Ólafsson's very vivid description of an expedition to Tranquebar in 1622. In 1931 this report was published in an unabridged English translation by The Hakluyt Society.[1] The learned geographer and ethnographer Adam Olearius from Schleswig, who in 1647 published his famous description of his mission to Persia, and who introduced the first Persian literature in German, also published descriptions of Danes travelling to India in Dutch ships. In 1678 another Dane, Frederik Bolling, who was also in Dutch service, published a report of his experiences, accompanied by a description of the trade winds and monsoons, the first description in Danish of these natural conditions. Furthermore we must mention the diary from an expedition to the East Indies 1672–5, written by the ship's doctor, J. P. Cortemündo. In 1953 it was published in Danish in a thoroughly annotated edition by Henning Henningsen; the preface to this edition contains contributions to the history of the East India Company after its reconstruction in 1670, and some of the appendices reproduce the correspondence of the Danish king with Sultan Ageng Tirtajasi of Bantam.[2] From the eighteenth century we may mention the diary by the midshipman Tobias Wigandt, who was on board the first Danish Chinaman, 1730–2,[3] and from the beginning of the nineteenth century one of the best-known descriptions is that of the poet Poul Martin Møller from a journey to China.[4] Also the letters by the Rev. K. E. Møhl from India from 1840 deserve to be mentioned. This tradition might be carried right up to our present time. It is true that the notions of Danish readers on Asiatic history and civilization are largely based on information, most often from British sources, to be found in travel books giving glimpses of life in the Far East.

The Mission. To the world at large, or at least to the Protestant world, Tranquebar became known after 1705–6 for the missionary work that was carried on during the following century with support from the King of

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[1] Second series, vol. 68: *The Life of the Icelander Jón Olafsson*, vol. 2. Cf. the extract in Danish published 1907 in the series *Memoirer og Breve*.

[2] *Søhistoriske Skrifter*, v, published by Handels- og Søfartsmusaeet at Kronborg.

[3] Published by P. L. Grove in *Tidsskrift for Søvaesen* (Copenhagen, 1900).

[4] *Efterladte Skrifter*, ii.

Denmark and Norway. Almost all the missionaries came from Halle in Germany, the centre of the pietistic movement. Schools were erected for 'Portuguese' (Eurasian) and 'Malabar' (Tamil) children; bibles, hymn-books, and tracts were translated and printed in Portuguese, Tamil, and other languages, and reports of the work of 'The Royal Danish Missionaries, or as it was also called, 'The Danish Halle Mission', were spread over Europe twice a year. Later these reports were collected in nine very substantial volumes, some of them of more than 2,000 pages, and though they do not give as much information as the *Lettres édifiantes* of the Jesuit Mission, they nevertheless do not deserve to be forgotten.[5] From the very outset the mission was in close contact with religious circles in England and also received English support. The English mission, organized by Baptists, established itself at the most important Danish settlement outside Tranquebar at Serampore (William Carey).[6]

Just as with the majority of the travel descriptions the mission reports are rather to be regarded as sources than as historical writing. Several historians have used their wealth of information, among others August Hennings (*vide infra*).[7] The reports reflect the zeal with which the missionaries, especially the pioneers among them, endeavoured to penetrate still deeper into the language, folklore, literature, and religion of the Tamils. The mission literature must no doubt be counted as part of the spiritual basis for the later flourishing oriental philological school at the Copenhagen University, the most distinguished member of which was Rasmus Rask, who visited Tranquebar in 1821. But this subject falls outside the scope of this survey.

The Company. Apart from contributions to the current discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the East Indian trade and other occasional publications no treatment is given of the history of the Danish company, until in 1824 Fr. Thaarup published a small book on that subject.[8] The author was a teacher of history and statistics at the University, and his treatment of the subject may safely be said to be typical of the young statistical science. His work may be characterized as a collection of material mostly compiled on the basis of the existing printed sources. Actually Thaarup's book was only a subscription number to a more comprehensive work, but the full plan was never realized. It is still true today that we lack a complete description of the history of the Danish company. On the other hand several contributions have appeared covering individual periods, just as the activities of the company have been dealt with in more general accounts of Denmark's commercial history. Regarding the private trade, contributions are found in biographies such as Johs. Werner's work

[5] *Der königl. dänischen Missionarien zu Ost-Indien eingesandter ausfürhlichen Berichte*, vols. i–ix (1718–72).

[6] Cf. V. Slomann, *Bizarre Designs in Silks* (Copenhagen, 1953), pp. 144 et seq.

[7] pp. 210–12.

[8] *Historiske og statistiske Efterretninger om det asiatiske Compagni.*

on the merchant Chr. Wilh. Duntzfelt (1927). Regarding contributions to the history of the company I shall mention that in 1908 J. H. Deuntzer, lawyer and politician, published a short account of the activity of the company after 1792.[9] Deuntzer was a member of the board of directors of the East Asiatic Company, and with his study he wanted to throw light on the historical basis of the concern, in the management of which he took part. In 1932 Kay Larsen published a book on the Danish China trade, a book marked by the author's use of maritime records. The book paints a vivid picture of life at the Danish factory at Canton, drawn against the background of the rules and regulations of the company. In an article of 1944 the historian Rich. Willerslev has accounted for the Dutch infiltration into the early organization of the company, but apart from this it is a fact that the more recent contributions have shown less interest in the externals of company organization—the rules and regulations—and more in the economic realities behind it. The investigations have been carried out on the ground that hardly during any period of Danish history had any single trade concern played such a dominating part in the policy and economy of its time as the Asiatic Company during the eighteenth century. In the archives of the company, so extremely well preserved from 1732, comprehensive material has been found, and attempts have been made to work up this material systematically. Besides the sources well-known in the European company literature (court books, letter books, etc.) it has been possible to resort to the accounts for statistical information on trade and finances. This is true both of the European and Asiatic side of the trade. In 1948 the author of this survey published an article on the company's trade during the period 1732–72,[10] and in the same year Aage Rasch and P. P. Sveistrup published a book on the company during *l'époque florissante*, 1772–92,[11] during which private trade on India was permitted, while the company continued to have monopoly of the trade with China. Rasch's and Sveistrup's book is the result of co-operation between historian and economist, and of the zeal with which they have studied the company as a type of enterprise. Also the question of the importance of the company for the trade balance and foreign exchange policy of the country has been dealt with. A comprehensive section of appendices is included. But furthermore it may be said that the work endeavours to deal with all aspects of the activities of the company, including also the political and cultural aspects.

The Colonies. I have mentioned above the mission reports from Tranquebar and their abundant information on the civilization of the Tamils. One of the first to profit from these reports was August Hennings, whose interesting three-volume work, *Gegenwärtiger Zustand der Besitzungen der Europäer in Ostindien*, 1784–6, deserves further comment. From a purely literary point of view it is incoherent and chaotic. The reason for Hennings to start on his investigations was the obsolete and erroneous information on the Danish trade in the East Indies in abbé Raynal's both much-admired and much-denounced work, *Histoire philosophique*. Hennings belonged to the enthusiastic Raynal devotees, but his well-developed sense of exact historical information made him criticize several chapters in Raynal's work, and in volume 1 he gives an up-to-date description of the Danish private trade on the East Indies. 'The true historian does not praise nor criticise when he is fully informed,' Hennings says, 'he just narrates, and history is his sentences and his proofs.' It was his plan to let this description be succeeded by a corresponding exposition of the actual conditions in the other European possessions. But as the work developed the plan changed. Thus volume 2 became a historical topographical description of the Carnatic, with a special account of the Tanjore district. To this was added a description of the products of the Coromandel coast and an exposition of the Tamil civilization, both spiritual and material. Hennings did not know India from personal experience. He drew on literary sources, for instance Anquetil du Perron, and the mission reports. How comprehensive his knowledge was can be seen from the descriptive bibliographical summary, comprising no less than 1,372 English, Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Latin, and other publications that he published in volume 3, together with a special discussion of *Zend Avesta*. Thus the original feature about his work was not new material brought home from outside, but rather new points of view. It was the demand for a more methodical utilization of the material at hand. Hennings advocated the limitation of the subject. 'We shall never get a real knowledge of this great and important part of the world, and we shall never be able to give a correct judgement of the prevailing conditions as long as our travel-book authors endeavour to capture everything at a single glance. Up to this day even the most famous travel books have made this mistake. Their authors have believed that in one description they have been able to compress manners and customs, social conditions and events from the court at Delhi, from Bengal, from the Deccan, from the Carnatic, from the east and west coasts, in spite of the fact that they have only made a few journeys from town to town or from port to port.' Furthermore, he gave a warning against the biased and superficial judgements of the 'character' of the Indian people. He said it was a widespread bad habit—which might be traced back to Tacitus—to mask a satire of European customs behind a rosy description of Indian idyll. According to Hennings there were also many examples of the opposite tendency: to excuse European failings by describing the Indians as cruel and treacherous. Finally Hennings was indefatigable in pointing out the scarceness of actual historical sources in spite of the voluminous literature at hand. These and other ideas place Hennings as a talented spokesman of the Enlightenment. Only to a smaller extent, however, was he able to realize these principles. He was most successful in volume 3 of his text-book, the critical historiography, which still stands as a remarkable monument of European oriental literature during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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[9] *Nationaløkonomisk Tidsskrift*, xlvi, 1908, 368–417, 453–510. 'Af det Asiatiske Kompagnis Historie'.

[10] *Dansk Historisk Tidsskrift*, Ser. 11, vol. ii, pp. 351–404, Kristof Glamann, 'Studie i Asiatisk Kompagnis økonomiske historie, 1732–72'.

[11] *Asiatisk Kompagni i den florissante periode*, 1772–92.

Only with Kay Larsen's work of 1907–8 do we get a complete description of the history of the Danish East Indian colonies.[12] Larsen was originally a business man by profession, but spent most of his time as a writer. He wrote a number of both historical and more fictitious descriptions of life in the old colonies. The foundation was a diligent collection of biographical data and information on ships, crews, and the like. This can be seen from the collections he left behind in the Royal Library and the Public Record Office in Copenhagen, and from the book he published in 1940 containing short biographies of governors, residents, commanders and chiefs.[13] Also the geographer Sofie Petersen's work of 1946 may be mentioned.[14] It puts special stress on the geographical conditions and gives a number of impressions from travels to the districts previously under Danish supremacy. Furthermore the author has endeavoured to point out the traces of the colonial period to be found in the literature, art, and architecture of Denmark.

There is a great difference both regarding the size and content of these works and the composite work, *Vore gamle Tropekolonier* (The Danish Tropical Colonies), volume 1, published in 1953. The size and get-up—comprising an abundance of original drawings—may lead our thoughts back to the pompous folio publications of the eighteenth century, for instance Valentijn's *Oud en Nieuw Ost-Indië*. The accounts are given by three historians, Gunnar Olsen, Kamma Struwe, and Aage Rasch, who have brought to light much new material. The chapters on conditions in the seventeenth century are the weakest, for which in a way the authors are not to be blamed, as they have tried to utilize the material to be found in Denmark. That is not much, however, particularly regarding the periods during which Tranquebar was left to itself. From the eighteenth century the sources are more abundant. From the period after 1777 it is possible on the basis of census-papers, reports, measures against famine and the like, to draw a picture of the general conditions of the Indian people, of agriculture and handicraft at Tranquebar and its neighbourhood. It naturally follows that trade takes up a central position in the description.

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[12] *De dansk-ostindiske Koloniers Historie*, i–ii (1907–8).

[13] *Guvernører, Residenter, Kommandanter og Chefer* (Copenhagen, 1940).

[14] *Danmarks gamle Tropekolonier*. In the series *Kulturgeografiske Skrifter*, iv, from The Royal Danish Geographical Society.

During the wars, in which it was possible to maintain neutrality, Tranquebar experienced a golden age, which among other things can be read from the customs duties. Also the financial management and the administration have been dealt with, together with the political and military development in the Carnatic, which forms the necessary background for a satisfactory account of the history of the colonies. All in all it may be said that the authors have been animated by the wish to give a realistic, unvarnished description. This is not least true of the descriptions of everyday life among the Danes in India. The treatment of the question of the sale of the colonies is based on an article by Georg Nørregaard from 1936.[15]

The Peoples of Asia. If we leave the colonial aspect the Danish contributions to the history of South East Asia during the period dealt with in this paper are few and from a historiographical point of view of less interest. There are, however, a couple of exceptions.

One exception is *Heroic Tales*, published in 1739 by Ludvig Holberg.[16] The great Danish comedy-writer and historian was the apprentice of French and British philosophers and historians. He had the same starting-point as Voltaire, but was a decade older, and he was in the front rank in the fight for the new view on what was to be called true history. His *Heroic Tales*, therefore, are not only the first Danish work taking its subject from Asiatic history, but also in heralding a new epoch in European civilization. It was a forerunner of Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs*, which also deals with the Orient. Holberg's sources were a number of the most famous travel-book authors such as François Bernier, François Catrou (Manouchi), Olearius, von Mandelsloe, Kämpfer, Chardin, Tavernier, Herbelot de Molainville, and others. His relation to these sources was quite journalistic. As a historian Holberg adhered to the same idea later formulated by Bolingbroke in his *Letters on History*: 'History is philosophy teaching by examples.' He arranged his heroes in pairs; each pair was provided with an introduction and a conclusion, in which he extracted the moral of the story. Thus Akbar and the Russian Czar, Peter, formed parallels who according to Holberg illustrated the historical truth that men are not born brave, but made brave. The two princes, however, were not complete parallels. On the deviations between them he wrote:[17] 'Akbar had fewer shortcomings, Peter more good points. The former endeavoured to make himself a perfect man, the latter to make his people perfect. Thus it is possible to call Akbar a greater man, Peter a greater king, because the inhabitants of Hindustan remained the same as they were, whereas the Russians became a new people and Russia a new realm, which has changed

[15] *Dansk Historisk Tidsskrift*, Ser. 10, vol. iii, pp. 335–412, 'Englands Kob af de danske Besiddelser i Ostindien og Afrika, 1845 og 1805'.

[16] Adskillige store Heltes og berømmelige Maends, isaer orientalske og indianske, sammenlignende Historie og Bedrifter efter Plutarchi Maade.

[17] In a free translation.

entire Europe, immensely altering the interests of Christian kings and introducing a new epoch in Europe and Asia.' Other Asiatic princes dealt with according to this pattern include Aurangzeb, who was paired with Sultan Saladin, and Shah Abbas, who was paired with Sultan Suleiman. In the introduction to the latter pair one finds a certain respect for other peoples' way of life, an incipient historicism and ethical relativism. These features, however, were not profound. It is more a question of an amazed establishment of and reasoning about the variations than a real understanding of the exotic. Thus Holberg hesitates to recommend the two gory regents as examples for others to follow. He excuses his choice of subject, however, through a reference to the premises of the orientals. The same misdeed need not be equally punishable in different persons, 'thus drunkenness is less reprehensible in a German and an Englishman than in a Spaniard and Italian; cowardice is a smaller fault in a Chinese than in a Japanese; impudence is less to be blamed in a soldier than in an ordinary citizen; and peevishness and anger is of greater profanation to a courtier who has been educated in simulation and politeness, than to a schoolmaster whose daily occupation consisted of alternating birch rod and ferule'.[18]

The other exception is a quite modern work, namely Vilhelm Slomann, *Bizarre Designs in Silks*, of 1953.[19] Even though first and foremost this beautiful work accounts for the Indian threads in the cultural pattern of Europe, with the most exclusive fabrics of the great museums as the starting-point—a subject falling outside the scope of this paper—it also contains very weighty contributions to the history of the Indian silk craft and to the trade in Indian textiles. Mr. Slomann, who is the former director of the Museum of Applied Arts in Copenhagen, has used British sources, among other things, for a description of the trade during the period 1666–1701 (the Indian craze). He also deals with the workshops at the courts of oriental princes, on which among others François Bernier in 1663 reported to Colbert, when the latter was organizing his 'Manufacture Royale des Meubles de la Couronne'. Finally the work contains an appendix on calicoes from Tranquebar and some notes on Pietre della Valle and J.-B. Tavernier.

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[18] In a free translation.

[19] (In English.) Published for the Ny Carlsberg Foundation, by Ejnar Munksgaard, Copenhagen.

17. JAMES MILL, MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE, AND THE HISTORY OF INDIA

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In our lifetime the history of the peoples of Asia will be rewritten, certainly by Asian historians themselves striving to express their new outlook as they emerge from the era of European dominance. Already this is taking place in India and Pakistan, whose history as it stands at present is to a large degree the creation of European, especially British, writers. In the past decade Europeans, too, have been taking a fresh look at this history, and for the first time have begun to examine the foundations of European historical writing in Asia.

If any systematic attempt is to be made to recreate objectively the history of India and Pakistan, whether by British or other historians, it is essential to establish first the basis from which we all have to start. What have been the course and the character, the major trends, of historical writing on these countries? What is our heritage? British historical writing on India constitutes the core of the problem. What, therefore, have been the major assumptions, attitudes, and purposes of British historians, and what schools of thought have been dominant? In point of fact these fields of inquiry are as yet almost unexplored.[1]

The British, in their conquest of India, found a country unlike the Europe of their time but resembling in some respects their own idea of the Europe of the middle ages, or even of the ancient empires described by Herodotus. So they could not turn away from the question: Are we to try to modernize this ancient land or in some way to preserve its institutions and govern through them?

At the period in the late eighteenth century when the English East India Company's power was spreading into Bengal, the ancient literature of the Hindus and much of Indian Muslim literature were still relatively unknown, as were the laws and customs of the people, and the Company's officers were groping for information about their new and numerous subjects. Just as Warren Hastings, during his governor-generalship, began deliberately to experiment in different systems of tax-gathering in order to discover who actually were the proprietors of land, so he began to encourage research into the laws, customs, and history of the people. He got a fellow Persian scholar, Nath Halhed, to translate the *Gentoo Code*, and with the arrival in Bengal in 1784 of William Jones (a Fellow of University College, Oxford, and a classical and Persian scholar), the stage was set for the discovery of the forgotten early history of India. Jones soon became interested in Sanskrit, a knowledge of which was just beginning to grow outside India, and he soon identified the early Indian ruler, Chandragupta, with the Sandrocottos of Greek historians. It was the beginning, in Jones's words, of a search for Indian 'historical writing unmixed with fable'. But Jones and his fellow-members of the Asiatic Society, which he founded, sought in vain, for the fact was that the Hindus and the early Indian empires, unlike the Muslims and their Indian states, had left few directly historical or chronological works; so few that we are justified in concluding that it was a branch of literature, a form of activity for which the need was small and which therefore they did not hold in high regard. Jones and his colleagues, unaware, thus sought a history that was as flimsy as gossamer. However, through their study of Sanskrit grammar, drama, and poetry, through their acquaintance with Hindu Law, through Hinduism, they formed an extremely high opinion of the quality of early Hindu civilization, confirming the expectations of Hastings that their work would 'open a new and most extensive range for the human mind, beyond the present limited and beaten field of its operations'. But these scholar-administrators—with Jones, Charles Wilkins, and Henry Colebrooke the three most prominent—were few in number and understandably their work was slow in maturing.

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[1] This paper was written as a sample for the Conference. Much of it has been developed and modified by subsequent papers.

Meanwhile, British India was being conquered and governed, and India had become one of the nuclear subjects of English politics. Civilians and soldiers poured into India. An English society grew up, aloof, fitting neatly into caste society. Meanwhile, Britain herself was changing. Evangelicalism and industrialization had their effects. The Brahmanized Englishman became an object of suspicion, the tolerant feelings of Warren Hastings for the Indian peoples, his desire to lay down a system for 'reconciling the people of England to the nature of Hindustan', were challenged by new views. The governor-general, Sir John Shore, and his friend Charles Grant, both of whom had long served in Bengal, represented the evangelical viewpoint, which had already been fully expressed, though not published, in Grant's *Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain*, in which he urged the application of Christianity and of western education to change, in his view, 'a hideous state of Indian society'. A group of Christian missionaries were busy getting into print with a similar indictment, and the battle to determine British purposes in India was fully joined in London.

It was just at this stage, in 1806, that James Mill, the Utilitarian philosopher and writer, at the age of thirty-three, began work in London on his *History of British India*. Twelve years later, in six substantial books, it was published. By deliberately attempting in the second and third books an estimate of the full significance of Hindu and Muslim government and civilization in India, it ranged far beyond its title, and the whole work constituted in fact the first comprehensive history of India. Its chief significance now is that it has exercised great influence on British writing and thinking on India, which has persisted down to our own day.

Surprisingly, little study has been made of Mill's *History*. Leslie Stephen, in his work *The Utilitarians*, dismissed it in a few lines; Halévy, in *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, gave this side of Mill only cursory attention. Only recently has attention been drawn to the significance of Mill's work. This neglect is the more surprising because, at the time of its publication, the *History* made a great impression. On the strength of it the East India Company's directors appointed Mill to a senior post on their London staff. Ricardo praised it to the skies. Ten years or so later Macaulay could refer to the *History* in the House of Commons as 'on the whole the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon', and afterwards in his famous *Minute on Indian Education* paid it the compliment of using some of Mill's material. Mill's son, John Stuart, described it as 'one of the most instructive histories ever written', and Hayman Wilson, Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, perhaps the most severe critic of the detail of the *History*, yet finally judged it in 1844 as still 'the most valuable work upon the subject which has yet been published'.

We are led to ask what provoked Mill, who had never been to India and had no acquaintance with its languages, into writing on its history. Why, when he had ostensibly set out to deal with British India, did he dwell in such detail on Hindu and Muslim civilization, and how did he come to make such a sweeping condemnation of their history? In a recent article in *The Cambridge Journal*, Mr. Duncan Forbes has argued that Mill wrote his *History* to propagate the doctrine of his friend and master, Jeremy Bentham; that it served his purposes to describe a despotically ruled Indian people dominated by caste, privilege, and religion, as then and always barbarous; that in the process he elaborated his own 'scientific' sociology and with it fashioned a 'scientific' instrument for the legislator in India. He concludes that Mill, who was beginning to write in the year 1806, at a time when a direct assault on Church and State in England was impossible, found a convenient way, in this attack on Hinduism, of undermining these institutions in England.[2]

This argument, sound though it may be, by no means gives us a full

[2] 'James Mill and India', October 1951.

explanation of why the *History* was written.[3] Mill's *History* is much wider in conception than this interpretation allows, as I think we can soon establish if we turn to Mill's own preface; of which his son, John Stuart, said: 'It gives a picture, which may be entirely depended upon, of the sentiments and expectation with which he wrote the *History*.' Mill tells us that in his study of British history he was surprised to find that 'the knowledge requisite for attaining an adequate conception of that great Indian scene of British action was collected nowhere'. This was certainly all the more surprising because, for twenty years past, India had been one of the most controversial subjects of English politics, and in that period nothing more dramatic had occurred in London, for example, than the impeachment of Hastings. The materials, in the form of parliamentary reports, lay readily to hand, as yet undigested.

Mill's motives in writing on India were complex, but uppermost was his desire to apply utilitarian doctrines in governing British India. As Halévy suggests, Bentham's references to India in his *Treatise on the Influence of Time and Place in Legislation* had interested Mill, and in the *History* he states that he intended 'to provide for British India, in the room of the abominable existing system, a good system of judicial procedure', but whereas Bentham was interested in finding out whether and how far his principles could be applied in India, Mill was bent on proving that they could be, and in the process designed a ladder or scale of civilization to simplify the legislator's task of prescribing for each society on each particular rung. 'To ascertain', he said, 'the true state of the Hindus in the scale of civilisation . . . is to the people of Great Britain . . . an object of the highest practical importance.' But by what tests was this state to be judged? 'Exactly in proportion as *Utility* is the object of every pursuit, may we regard a nation as civilised.'[4]

By this assessment, contemporary as well as ancient India, whether in science, religion, government, law, or political economy, was barbarous. But Sir William Jones and his fellow Sanskritists had meanwhile been arguing that the early Hindus had reached a high degree of civilization. Mill denied this, partly because, he said, 'the term civilisation was by Jones, as by most men . . . attached to no fixed and definite assemblage of ideas', partly because he had no difficulty in finding evidence to suit his purpose. While the scholars who agreed with Jones, like Colebrooke and Wilkins and Prinsep, had been slow in producing results, other more superficial and often prejudiced interpreters, and not only missionaries and evangelicals, had been quick and prolific in publication.

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[3] For example, Mill's great predecessors, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon, had shown that History could make money. There is also evidence to suggest that Mill had his eye on a post at India House.

[4] Mill in fact accepted the Rationalists' assumption that progress could be taken for granted, and also the Scottish sociological school's arguments based on an assumed uniformity of human nature.

Mill chose to rely, for example, on the evidence of Robert Orme, whose accounts of India were written early and not intended for publication; on Buchanan, who had tried and failed to learn Sanskrit and was prejudiced against Indians; on Tennant, a most superficial observer; and on Tytler, who was very young and had seen Indian society through the refractive medium of the criminal law courts. Once committed to this view that Indian society was barbarous, Mill was highly selective in his use of evidence. The testimony of Dubois the missionary, of Tytler and others, is cited when hostile to the Hindus, ignored when it is favourable; and the massive evidence on the character of Indians, collected in the parliamentary investigation of 1813, on the whole favourable to them, went unnoticed. In his Preface, Mill had gone to great pains and shown great ingenuity in defending himself against the criticism that he had never been to India and knew nothing of its languages—arguments nowadays that will convince no one. If he had visited the country he would probably have gained just that experience through which to distinguish clearly between reliable and unreliable witnesses. As it was, he could not judge that evidence which lay beyond his experience, and he commonly attached the greatest weight to the writers who are least entitled to confidence. In this manner he constructed a damning indictment of Indian society and then went on to prescribe a revolutionary cure to be achieved through the application of government and law on utilitarian principles.

Mill's *History*, once published, held the field unchallenged for twenty-five years, being reprinted in 1820, 1826, and 1840. Then a modest competitor appeared, in Mountstuart Elphinstone's *History of Hindu and Muhammadan India*, taking a more favourable view of Indian society; but it covered only part of the subject, and was much less impressive, more cautious in approach and manner, much less exciting to read, and, in any event, soon afterwards, in 1848, Hayman Wilson, the leading Orientalist of the day, produced another edition of Mill, with elaborate footnotes and an extension of the story from 1805 to 1834, that is, down to the day when the Company became wholly a political body. Mill was thus given a new lease of life, so that his *History* in effect over the whole middle range of the nineteenth century provided the main basis for British thought on the character of Indian civilization and on the way to govern Indians. What, then, was the place of Elphinstone and Hayman Wilson?

In this first phase of empire we have seen three schools of thought competing to control the attitude and policy of Britain towards India. First, those like Hastings and Jones, joined later by Elphinstone, Munro, and Malcolm, who not only knew India and something of its languages and peoples, but also showed a romantic, sympathetic understanding of their problems. Indians, they agreed, would have to undergo change, but slowly, with deference to their own institutions and not on speculative principles. Secondly, the evangelicals like Shore and Grant, both backed by and backing the missionaries. And, thirdly, the rationalists represented by Mill; the last two groups finding much in common in their condemnation of Hinduism and, to a lesser extent, Mohammedanism. The evangelicals sought to change India mainly through education; the rationalists put their emphasis on government and law. The happiness, not the liberty, of Indians was the end in view. Mill had produced in his history a justification for the policy of the rationalists; Grant had written his *Observations*; now Elphinstone tried to redress the balance by writing and encouraging others to write histories worthy of the romantic school.

As administrator and scholar, Elphinstone gave his life to India. Sent out as a boy of sixteen, and naturally wild and gay, he had every inducement, like the notorious William Hickey, to become a rake. But, deliberately taking himself in hand, he sublimated this wildness in field sports, and consciously sought to become a scholar-administrator. The range of his reading, to judge by his diary alone, was vast; in the first months of 1805—when he was twenty-six, and resident at Nagpur in the thick of the Marāthā struggles—he mentions the *Iliad*, which he had just finished; the *Electra* of Sophocles; *Philoctetes*; he was fagging away at Greek, reading *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Alcestis*, diverging to Tyrtaeus and some of the elegiac poets. Then he applied himself to a course of Greek history, beginning with Thucydides, Xenophon, and the orations of Demosthenes. There is mention casually of Cobbett, Petrarch, and Walter Scott's newly published *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and novels innumerable.

He sustained this manner of life until, in 1827, at the age of forty-eight, he chose to retire from the Bombay governorship. He refused all honours and all further employment, whether the governor-generalship of India, the under-secretaryship of the Board of Control, or an important mission to Canada. He was still bent on becoming the complete scholar, and took up his Greek again. All along Elphinstone had been deeply interested in history. Thucydides was his bedside companion. He had inspired others of his own way of thinking to write history. In 1816, given the time, he would have started on a history of the Marāthā peoples of western India; instead he stimulated his assistant at Poona, Captain Grant Duff, into doing it, handing over to him the Peshwa's state papers and correspondence, and in 1825 Grant Duff's two-volume work *A History of the Mahrattas* appeared. It is a straightforward, sympathetic account, invaluable in that it is based on material that has long since disappeared; a classic account though never, in fact, much read. The first publisher he went to told him he would publish if the title were altered. 'I said, "It is the history of the Mahrattas and only of the Mahrattas!" '

'Who knows anything about the Mahrattas?'

'That's the reason the book has been written—no one does.'

'Well, and who cares to know? If you call it the *Downfall of the Moguls and the Rise of the English* or something of that kind, it may do, but *A History of the Mahrattas*—that will never sell.'

So Grant Duff took his manuscript to another publisher and had it published at his own expense. Also among Elphinstone's disciples were William Erskine, one of his Bombay officials, who completed a translation of the *Memoirs of Bābur*, the first Mogul Emperor, and Captain James Tod, who between 1812 and 1823 collected into three rich volumes *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, this being the first serious attempt to investigate the beliefs of the Indian peasantry, trying to do for them what the Sanskritist was doing for the Brahmins. Walter Scott particularly expressed delight in Tod's *Rajasthan*, and in the early writings of Elphinstone and of his colleague, John Malcolm, appreciating perhaps not only 'the shepherd state' of the societies they described but also their interpretation of them.

All along, Elphinstone had been uneasy about Mill's *History of India*, uneasy because it was in his view masterly, yet misguided, setting out to revolutionize India on abstract principles, the converse of his own empirical methods in attempting to reorganize the defeated Marāthā peoples. With characteristic under-emphasis, after reading it when it first appeared, he said: 'The ingenious, original, and elaborate work of Mr. Mill left some room for doubt and discussion.' Moreover—and here he really begins to knock the props away—'the excellence of histories derived from European researches alone does not entirely set aside the utility of similar enquiries conducted under the guidance of impressions received in India; which, as they arise from a separate source, may sometimes lead to different conclusions'. In retirement he became increasingly critical of Mill—'the offensive thing . . . is the cynical, sarcastic tone', he was uncandid 'in the native part' (that is, the Hindu and Mohammedan part); 'as the disciple of a school of philosophy advancing new opinions, Mill was obliged to resort to argument to establish his principles and destroy those offered to him'.

Elphinstone had sent for and eagerly read Bentham's writings but he had concluded that human experience was too vast and rich to be comprehended by Benthamism. He once told Malcolm, his friend and successor in Bombay: 'You will not know what difficulty is until you come . . . to reconcile Maratha custom with Jeremy Bentham.'[5] But Elphinstone was above all a modest man: he had seen the need to combat Mill and did not feel equal to it, or to the subject. To his friend, William Erskine, he confided that 'to write India's early and medieval history would require great knowledge, and a very philosophical and reflecting mind. If suitably executed it would be a most important work.' The subject of India, he said, might be unimportant to European readers and 'it must (therefore, be made up by connecting it with the general history of the species: and this requires a through knowledge of the principles of human action. The style also must be condensed and animated, and the reflections striking and profound.'

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[5] I am indebted for this apt quotation to Dr. K. A. Ballhatchet.

Encouraged by Erskine and others, and driven by a sense of duty, he forced himself to begin in June 1834, concentrating on the Hindu and Mohammedan histories. But in 1836 he again lost confidence and put the manuscript away—'The whole seems commonplace and what . . . might easily be produced by any ordinary workman.' But, prodded again by his friends, he went back to it and in 1841 this part of the book was published. He then turned to the British conquest, which, he said, had already been 'well digested by Mill' and therefore needed only 'an agreeable form, which requires imagination and eloquence'. But he had already confessed that in the matter of style he did not feel equal even to Mill, and in truth he found writing difficult.

At this point he happened to read in *The Edinburgh Review* Macaulay's essay on Clive, which took the form of a review of Malcolm's *Life of Clive*. Macaulay begins by wondering why English readers are not interested in the conquest of India. 'This subject is, to most readers,' he says, 'not only insipid, but positively distasteful. Perhaps the fault lies partly with the historians.' And now that he himself had been to India, we note that he has modified his view of Mill—'Mr. Mill's book, though it has undoubtedly great and rare merit, is not sufficiently animated and picturesque to attract those who read for amusement.' In his essays on Clive and Hastings, Macaulay had therefore deliberately set out to make good this deficiency. For Elphinstone this was the end: he already felt inferior to Mill, and now unable to compete with Macaulay's fireworks. His *History of British Power in the East*, which had got as far as Hastings' governor-generalship, was therefore put aside, never to be finished.

On British India, then, he had failed to replace Mill, and this failure was signalized by the appearance of Hayman Wilson's edition of Mill. Although Wilson, who was a Sanskritist, differed radically from Mill's interpretation of Hindu civilization (and indeed exposed it), he yet chose to do this in the form of footnotes, leaving Mill's text as it stood. It is incredible that he should not have chosen to write a new history altogether, but possibly his training as a Sanskritist, which had accustomed him to the method of interpreting a text in this way, had something to do with his choice. On British problems in governing India, then, Mill and Wilson remained the standard work; and new editions appeared in 1848 and again at the time of the Mutiny and on the assumption of Indian government by the Crown.

On the Hindu and Mohammedan parts Elphinstone was a competitor but not, I think, a powerful competitor. It is true that his account was informed by personal observation and based on chronicles provided by his friend, Erskine, and that in the year of its publication it came into use at Haileybury College, where the East India Civil Service cadets were trained. But Elphinstone was too diffident, too cautious; his criticism of Mill was implied, never open, his attack always oblique. So, to Mill's sweeping judgements on the Hindus he offers:

> 'Ten different civilised nations are found within India. . . . Our writers confound the distinctions of time and place; they combine in one character the Maratha and the Bengali. . . . Those who have known the Indians longest have always the best opinion of them. . . . It is more to the point that all persons who have retired from India think better of the people they have left after comparing them with others even of the most justly admired nations. These considerations should make us distrust our own impressions, when unfavourable, but cannot blind us to the fact that the Hindus have in reality some great defects of character.'

This is typical of his matter and method. His work is so scrupulous that it lacks the intensity of spirit and the animation of personality which alone can transform historical composition into historical literature. He had set out to make as short a history as Mill, 'more full in facts and free from disputes and dissertations'.[6] But with Mill holding the field and saying what he had said, and in the way he had said it, the hour called for 'disputes and dissertations'.

But in 1857 the Mutiny occurred, accompanied by acute racial bitterness, and culminating in what was termed 'the British reconquest of India'. These events tended to reinforce the lines of thought on Indian civilization drawn by Mill rather than those suggested by Elphinstone. Writing in 1844, Hayman Wilson had asserted that Mill's *History* was exercising a deep formative influence on British policy and practice in India. Wilson himself had served in Bengal for a quarter of a century, and after his return acted for many years as oral examiner of the Indian Civil Service cadets at Haileybury College, so we may give emphasis to his statement:

> 'In the effects which Mill's *History* is likely to exercise upon the connection between the people of England and the people of India . . . its

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[6] Since writing the above I have seen Mr. Duncan Forbes' study of *The Liberal Anglican Idea of History*. He uses the adjective 'romantic' to describe this school of middle nineteenth-century British historians—most prominent among whom was Thomas Arnold. Elphinstone's work has close affinity with their work. They diverge basically from the Utilitarians in the nature of their conception of development, in their psychological theory, and represent a revolt against Utilitarian thinking. As Mr. Forbes has shown, progress for them was not an unquestioned assumption.

> tendency is evil: it is calculated to destroy all sympathy between the ruler and the ruled; to preoccupy the minds of those who issue annually from Great Britain to monopolise the posts of honour and power in Hindustan, with an unfounded aversion towards those over whom they exercise that power. . . . There is reason to fear that these consequences are not imaginary, and that a harsh and illiberal spirit has of late years prevailed in the conduct and councils of the rising service in India which owes its origin to impressions imbibed in early life from the *History* of Mr. Mill.'

Wilson may well have had in mind the ill effects of over-centralization under the Charter Act of 1833, the severity of land revenue policy under Holt Mackenzie, or under Pringle in the Bombay Deccan on principles laid down by Mill, or the land settlement of Bird and Thomason in the North West Provinces, described as 'a fearful experiment . . . calculated so as to flatten the whole surface of society', which no doubt was partly responsible for the Mutiny. In 1844, too, the Government declared that candidates qualified by a knowledge of English would be given preference in the public service, and other measures removed the traditional protection given to Indian religious ceremonies. The Company's administration was becoming heavy-handed and its domestic policy forcible.

Mill's *History* was an established text-book at Haileybury College, where, from 1809 to 1855, the Company's Civil Service cadets were trained, and where a succession of eminent utilitarians or close sympathizers held senior teaching posts: Malthus, Empson, James Mackintosh, and later the celebrated Sir James Stephen. Holt Mackenzie, Pringle, and Thomason went to Haileybury, and also Henry Elliot, the very first 'competition wallah', who did more than anyone else to perpetuate the Mill tradition in writing on Indian history. Elliot (who rose to be chief secretary in the Government of India's Foreign Department) learnt Persian and devoted all his spare time to collecting the chronicles of the Indian Muslim annalists of the Muslim and Mughal empires of the eleventh to seventeenth centuries, which he duly catalogued and classified: with the help of John Dowson (formerly a tutor at Haileybury and later Professor of Hindustani at University College, London) and others, selections from these chronicles were translated and published between 1867 and 1877 in eight large volumes. Since then, the story of Muhammadan rule in India has been largely written from them: including Sir Wolseley Haig's important third and (in part) fourth volumes of *The Cambridge History of India*, published in 1928 and 1937, and still accepted as the standard British work. Elliot poured as great scorn on Muhammadan government in India as Mill had done on the Hindu; in the process pushing into the background the more sober, more sympathetic, and objective interpretation of Elphinstone.

Not that Elliot wrote a formal history, but if he had, I think we can tell from his preface and selection of material what line it would have taken.[7] He strikes a note which was to be caught by John Strachey in the field of administration, by Fitzjames Stephen in law and political thought, by Kipling in literature, by Sir John Seeley in history, and by Curzon in government. They were all agreed that the happiness of the governed which might be ensured by strong executive government and the rule of law was more important than self-government; their influence overbore Macaulay's and John Stuart Mill's attempts to liberalize the utilitarian views of James Mill and also Ripon's experiment in training Indians for self-government.

The British administration had moved into a phase of imperial dogmatism and complacency about its achievement in India. Sir William Wilson Hunter, one of the most famous of Indian civilians, who in the eighteen-eighties organized the great *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, including a volume on history, and followed it up with a *History of British India*, put this question to a friend: 'Can we ever conciliate India?' This was the vital question to which the ablest administrators deliberately answered 'No' in the India of the Company. It remains the vital question to which we deliberately answer 'Yes' in the India of the Queen. As a matter of fact, he concludes triumphantly: 'The task of conciliation has been accomplished.' This was in 1891, on the eve of the *swarāj*, or freedom movement. Others, less eminent, answered differently. There was Digby, whose study called *Prosperous British India*, asserting that Britain was unfairly exploiting India, draining her of wealth, set off a controversy that is not yet closed.

There were, too, Octavian Hume, Wedderburn, and Cotton, who chose to put their emphasis rather on the British need to satisfy the new Indian middle class. With the growth of this class, preoccupied with politics, a new audience with a passionate and vested interest in Indian history had appeared; an audience which exaggerated India's ancient glories and present miseries, in demanding a more sympathetic interpretation of their own history. In an attempt to meet them, new editions of Elphinstone's work were brought out in 1905 and 1911, the preface stating that they were intended for Indian university students.

But by this time the researches of innumerable persons, members of the Asiatic societies, Sanskritists, Persian scholars, not least the contribution of the archaeologists and numismatists, had rendered Elphinstone's work hopelessly out of date, and had carried the range of Indian historical studies beyond the reach of any one man; but the evident need for text-book summaries persuaded Vincent Smith, who retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1900 and was teaching Indian History at Dublin, to write, in 1904, the first general and authoritative history of early India in English, and seven years later to put together in one volume his own researches on early India with those of Elliot and Elphinstone and others on Muslim India, and those of Mill, Wilson, Hunter, and others on the British period.

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[7] Dr. P. Hardy has drawn my attention to Elliot's most revealing preface to his *History of India as told by its own historians.*

It had, in fact, taken a century of British paramountcy to produce an adequate text-book on the history of India. Smith wrote at the close of the Curzon era and at the start of the transition to Indian self-government, and his work forms an important bridge in our story. In his desire to write on the early and medieval history of India, and in his sympathetic treatment of Indian civilization, he links up with Elphinstone; but some of his fundamental assumptions reveal differing views. When describing the disturbed condition of India in the seventh century, after the death of the emperor Harsha, he cannot help commenting that from this description the reader will gain 'a notion of what India always has been when released from the control of a superior authority, and what she would be again if the hands of the benevolent despotism, which now holds her in its iron grasp, should be withdrawn'. In his outline history, 'which', he says, 'was designed to preserve due proportion throughout', he can find no more suitable place at which to bring to an end a story of over 2,000 years than 'the memorable visit of Their Imperial Majesties to India at the close of 1911'.

It was almost impossible to write in such a way as to satisfy both the Indian nationalists and the Indian Civil Service. Each side claimed that it, and it alone, represented the masses, and in this conflict, and in a genuine doubt on British ways and purposes in India, much of the zest, the frankness, and interest passes out of British historical writing on India. When, as in the nineteenth century, no one thought of any public but a British one, criticism was lively and positive judgement was passed without regard to political exigencies. In the twentieth century most of those who have written have been haunted by the question: 'Will what I say in this difficult period of transition make for easier and quieter government?' This awareness of an eavesdropping Indian public has exercised a constant, silent censorship, seeming to make some writers, like the late Professor Dodwell, for example, appear unsympathetic to Indian political aspirations, and others, like Edward Thompson, merely sentimental about them.

But for the greater part, this silent censorship has had the effect of reinforcing those trends in British historical writing on India which were created by Mill and Elliot, in a word, to focus attention on what the British were doing in India, in government, law, and administration and to ignore what was happening to Indian society, and nowhere is this more clearly to be seen than in the *Cambridge History of India*, the standard and by far the most solid work of British historical scholarship on India, five volumes of which were published between 1922 and 1937. This co-operative history bears the mark of the period in which it was written and the legacy of this dominant tradition of which I have been speaking.

The two volumes on the Mohammedan empires, edited and substantially written by Sir Wolseley Haig, are built on Elliot's researches, representing a chronicle of chronicles and a chronicle of emperors. Government and the army are prominently displayed, but society, whether Muslim or Hindu, is conspicuous by its absence. The general tone is cool and occasionally contemptuous. The two volumes on India under the British give overwhelming attention to problems political and diplomatic, and especially in the last volume, to questions of British central and district administration; no doubt valuable in themselves, but throwing the work as a whole sadly out of balance. The social and economic development of the country, and the evolution of the Indian peoples, is treated as secondary; and, for instance, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, the protagonist of Bengali Hindu nationalism, is not even mentioned. In these volumes the tradition of Elliot, Mill, and Fitzjames Stephen is manifest. But volume one, on ancient India, edited by Rapson the Sanskritist, stands apart. Unlike the other volumes, which were largely written by professional historians and members of the Indian Civil Service, it was written by Orientalists. Perhaps because of this, it evokes the spirit of William Jones and Elphinstone, describing sympathetically a whole civilization, equally as concerned with society as with government. Unlike the other volumes, it withstands the impact of the Act of Independence of 1947.

18. MACAULAY'S WRITINGS ON INDIA

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The Significance of Macaulay's Writings on India

When Carlyle called Macaulay 'a poor Holland House unbeliever with spectacles instead of eyes'[1] he expressed an opinion which is yet the main point in our estimate of the great historian. It is time that we asked ourselves if the remark was not too forthright to be quite sensible and if it had not something of that rhetoric which, we think, was one of Macaulay's vices as an historian. For when we declare Macaulay guilty of looking at the past with a lens of his own which, we say, is the lens of Whiggism, we have to consider the very important question if man's knowledge of the past is not inevitably conditioned by the ideas and values of the present; if all history is not, by the very nature of things, bound to be influenced by a complex of sympathies and antipathies. The present account of Macaulay's historical writings on India is based on the idea that in all historiography there is a point of view or moral perspective which does not necessarily impair honesty in investigation and accuracy in details, that the search for historical truth need not discourage or vitiate the search for historical facts. I shall judge Macaulay's contribution to historical literature on British India in terms of two principles of historiography which arise out of this central view of history. First, that even a full knowledge of the facts of history leaves scope for a difference in historical perspective; and, secondly, that the validity of historical opinion and the accuracy of historical narrative are to be judged by the measure of the historian's respect for facts as he could at all know them. A book of history cannot be bad because its opinions are now distateful or its data now seem meagre. With all that it could make a contribution to man's total knowledge of the past if it was at all the result of honest inquiry and inspired by love of truth. Looking at Professor Godfrey Davies's *Bibliography of British History for the Stuart Period* one would know what a large amount of materials Macaulay could never use for his history of England. And if Macaulay's *History of England* is not a poor history because it does not use the Berlin archives his essay on Warren Hastings is not poor history either because it has no reference to materials collected in the book on Sir Elijah Impey written by his son.[2]

It is possible that Macaulay's essays on Clive and Warren Hastings have suffered in reputation owing to the new trend in British historical writings on India which commenced after the Mutiny—that point I do not propose to discuss in this essay. I would only mention that this new trend which is characterized by an attitude of sympathy towards the heroes of the Company days has led to a curiously self-contradictory opinion on Macaulay's writings on India. Of such opinion H. A. L. Fisher's is an example. In Fisher's view Macaulay's essays on India are marred by inaccuracies and prejudices and yet are good history. The relevant passage in Fisher's essay on the Whig historians is worth quoting as a typical instance of the inconsistencies in a good part of contemporary estimate of Macaulay as an historian of India. 'The reputation of Macaulay as an historian has suffered not a little from the survival and republication of his essays, more particularly of such essays as were written in youth before he went out to India. He should be judged not by the Edinburgh essays, in which he avowedly forced the note in order to make an impression during the short life of a periodical magazine, but by his History. All the essays are brilliant, but in some accuracy is sacrificed to effect, while others are marred by blunders or the bias of temperament or party feeling. In the History, composed for distant posterity, the blemishes are fewer and less apparent, while the merits discernible in the essays shine with an equal or a greater lustre. There is no part of the History which has suffered so much from the criticism of later historians as has the essay on Warren Hastings. . . . Yet, the merits even of this, the most sharply censured of his shorter pieces are so conspicuous that no student of the history of British rule in India omits to read what Macaulay has there written, or, having read it, fails to get a juster appreciation of Hastings himself, of the wide sweep and extraordinary character of his responsibilities and powers, and of the confidence and attachment he inspired in vast masses of human beings.'[3]

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[1] J. A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle*, i, 192.

[2] Barwell Impey, *Memoirs of Sir Elijah Impey*, 1840.

If H. A. L. Fisher distinguishes the *History of England* from the essays, Vincent Smith distinguishes one essay from another: 'Macaulay's "Essay on Clive", unlike that on Warren Hastings, is essentially true history . . . the reason for the difference between the two compositions is that the essayist when discussing the career of Hastings was dazzled by the glare of Burke's eloquence and biased by the weight of Whig tradition.'[4] It seems a strange suggestion to make that Macaulay allowed his politics to vitiate his estimate of a man whom he considered as a great Englishman. His brief estimate of Warren Hastings in his letter to Napier may well be read as a preface to the essay: 'I think Hastings, though far from faultless, one of the greatest men that England ever produced. He had pre-eminent talents for Government, and great literary talents too; fine taste, a princely spirit, and heroic equanimity in the midst of adversity and danger. He was a man for whom nature had done much of what the Stoic philosophy pretended, and only pretended, to do for its disciples.'[5]

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[3] The Raleigh Lecture on History at the British Academy, 1918, published in the *Proceedings* of the Academy, vol. xiv.

[4] *Essay on Clive*, ed., 1910.

Equally confusing is the view of J. Cotter Morison who thinks that it is not political bias but love of rhetoric which spoils the essay: 'He was not, one likes to think, intentionally and wittingly unfair; but he was liable to become inebriated with his own rhetoric till he lost the power of weighing evidence.'[6] I think Morison here is led a little off the track by a wrong view of rhetoric itself; for one who could be credited with a mastery of style would not have to distort facts for the sake of a graceful Ciceronian period. Here it would seem Macaulay has suffered for his eloquence. What is said powerfully is suspected to have been said with an insufficient care for truth. I think Macaulay cared for truth and nothing but truth and that his rhetoric is only a glowing expression of that truth. He made errors, and he took sides; but there is no instance in the writings of this honest Englishman of a deliberate suppression or distortion of known evidence for pushing through a pet idea.

Once we can get rid of these two notions of Whiggism and rhetoric as the besetting vices of Macaulay as an historian we will discover merit in his work and even see some special worth in it. For one thing Macaulay's two essays attracted a larger reading public than any other writing on India had done before. Partly for their literary brilliance and partly for their short size they remained for long a kind of *locus classicus* of British Indian history among the lay readers. Secondly, they are written by one who, though ignorant of Indian languages and literatures, was connected with the Indian administration for four years and made an historic contribution to the growth of its penal and educational systems. And thirdly, and this is particularly significant, they are an account of the growth of the British empire in India written with no desire for concealing or condoning those acts of doubtful morality without which perhaps no empire could ever be built. The two essays are important as a judgement on a great British political achievement which is singularly free from patriotic bias. They are an example of political self-criticism in British historical writing. And if there has been a bias in the other direction, that is, if the criticism of the British activity in India has been too severe, it is at least of great value as a wholesome deterrent to self-flattery in historical writing.

Macaulay's Understanding of Indian Problems

Macaulay's judgement on Clive and Hastings and his account of their work in India proceed from a basic attitude towards the Indian question. And if we are to judge Macaulay as an historian of British India we have to consider how far that attitude is valid. This basic attitude is best expressed in the speech on India that he made in the House of Commons on the 10th of July, 1833: 'That Empire is itself the strangest of all political anomalies. . . . The Company is an anomaly; but it is part of a system where everything is an anomaly. It is the strangest of all Governments, but it is designed for the strangest of all empires.'[7] Of the creation of this strange empire he has left a readable and fairly reliable record. And if the builders of this empire appear as strange characters in his pages doing strange things, it is because they are all actors in a strange political drama. Macaulay understood this irony inherent in the situation as James Mill, who was the greater historian, did not. And it was this sense of irony which taught him to be merciful even to the man whom he does not hesitate to condemn. If he thought that some of Hastings' action were bad he also knew that they could not have been otherwise under the circumstances. And if there is a fault in his delineation of the character of Hastings it is the fault of applying to a study of the business of statecraft and empire-building the rules of Christian ethics and his idea of British justice and honour. He understood that the Governor-General was caught in a mesh from which he could not extricate himself without destroying his own and the Company's fortunes. He said: 'One thing, indeed, is to be said in excuse for him. The pressure applied to him by his employers at home, was such as only the highest virtue could have withstood, such as left him no choice except to commit great wrongs, or to resign his high post, and with that post all his hopes of fortune and distinction.'[8] Macaulay has never been niggardly in showing a mercy that comes from understanding. If he condemned Hastings' avarice he also saw that avarice was bound to be the guiding principle of the diplomacy which circumstances forced upon him. It is worthy of note that even such a confirmed apologist and defender of Warren Hastings as Vincent Smith had to speak of evil circumstances in extenuation of his evil acts: 'His few errors, so far as they were real, were those of a statesman exposed to imminent peril and beset by embarrassments so complex that fallible human judgement was bound to err occasionally.'[9] And James Mill, who is so harsh on the man, thinks on the same lines when he says that 'he was placed in difficulties and acted upon by temptation such as few public men have been called upon to overcome'. The whole question is whether our admiration for the great capacities of the architect of the Indian empire should be allowed to relieve us of the purely moral responsibility of pointing out his great faults. On the face of it, it is a very difficult question to answer, for here the faults are necessarily bound up with the capacities. And it is a particularly important point in historiography relating to imperial and colonial history as to how far the political and military genius of a conqueror should be judged in terms of an absolute moral code and whether what is politically inescapable and militarily imperative should be thought morally permissible. This question the impeachment raised and this question Macaulay's two essays raised again. And the future historian of British India, be he an Englishman or an Indian or of any other country, will have to settle this question if he is to be truthful in his narrative and honest in his judgement. To those to whom Macaulay seems vexingly harsh on Hastings the essay as a whole will appear as a piece of writing disfigured by too much ethics. We are to ask ourselves if such ethics has any place in an historical study. Macaulay thought it had. And when we judge Macaulay as an historian of India we may well remember that what we call his prejudice is at bottom the result of his moral preoccupation.

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[5] Letter to Napier, 11 January 1841, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, popular edition, 1889, p. 398.

[6] *Macaulay*, first edition, 1882, pocket edition, 1909, p. 83 fn.

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[7] *The Miscellaneous Speeches and Writings of Lord Macaulay*, popular edition, 1889, pp. 558–9.

[8] Lord Macaulay's *Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome*, popular edition, 1889, p. 614.

[9] *The Oxford History of India*, 1920, p. 548.

The Charge of Rhetoric

As to the charge of rhetoric that is often brought against Macaulay I have said that if Macaulay was good at rhetoric he would not be led astray by it. And it is possible that we suspect indifference to facts and partiality in judgement for no other reason than that the style is too fine and the description too picturesque. We should rather judge the two essays in terms of what he says on the style of historical writing in his essay on History which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* in May 1828: 'A perfect historian must possess an imagination sufficiently powerful to make his narration affecting and picturesque yet he must control it so absolutely as to content himself with the materials which he finds, and to refrain from supplying deficiencies by additions of his own.'[10] It may, however, be suggested that in style, Macaulay has been guilty of the defects which he censures in Tacitus in the same essay: 'He carries his love of effect far beyond the limits of moderation. He tells a fine story finely, but he cannot tell a plain story plainly. He stimulates till stimulants lose their power.'[11] But even if we are to say that Macaulay is at times too brilliant in his writing we cannot make it a charge against him as an historian unless we can show that this brilliance has led to a tampering with facts as he at all knew them. That he knew less about his subject than the later historians is true. It is also true that he had his own views on Hastings and that he stated them. But the question is whether this ignorance and opinion made him an untruthful recorder of events and a dishonest judge of characters. I think they did not. Later historians have corrected his inaccuracies in facts and have shown with good reason that his judgements are at times too harsh. And yet we must value his historical probity as we must also value the honesty and force of his judgement. For the reflections of a great mind endowed with such extraordinary powers of comprehension as Macaulay's was, and ennobled, moreover, by a strong sense of justice and fairness such as he never lacked, are an important contribution to historiography. Macaulay's opinions of Hastings are important because they are honest opinions and they deserve the consideration even of those who, knowing more and having a larger measure of sympathy for the man, are to give a different judgement. And here too, we may recall Macaulay's own observations on history: 'Sometimes, it is true, superior eloquence and dexterity will make the worse appear the better reason; but it is at least certain that the judge will be compelled to contemplate the case under two different aspects.'[12] So Macaulay would listen even to a witness who is guilty of distorting a narrative into conformity with a theory if only for the reason that he may, after all, show some sides of the question which others may ignore. Of such deliberate distortion Macaulay is not guilty. He has made mistakes, but he has not been consciously false to the duties of an historian. And while we correct his mistakes or accept some of his judgement with some necessary qualifications we should nevertheless value the truth of his general conclusions. For that is a truth which our greater knowledge of the subject may conceal from our view. In history a larger measure of materials does not always guarantee a larger measure of truth. Perspective is important and courage of conviction. It is true that Macaulay often appears too harsh on Hastings and on Sir Elijah Impey. But this harshness may act as a wholesome check on an excessive sympathy for them in future historians. The two essays will ever have a value as showing that the task of empire-building is an odd job and that it cannot be accomplished without a measure of inhumanity and injustice.

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[10] *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, popular edition, 1885, p. 132.

[11] Ibid., p. 197.

Bengali Estimate of Macaulay

If in England Macaulay has been found to be too severe on Hastings and Impey, in Bengal he is criticized for his contemptuous remarks on her people. Macaulay called the Bengalis cowards and liars, in language which may seem, on the face of it, too rhetorical: 'The physical organization of the Bengali is feeble even to effeminacy. He lives in a constant vapour bath. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence and veracity are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable. . . . What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the Old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengali. Large promises, smooth excuses, elaborate tissues of circumstantial falsehood, chicanery, perjury, forgery, are the weapons, offensive and defensive, of the people of the lower Ganges.'[13]

[12] Ibid., p. 155. [13] Macaulay's *Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome*, popular edition, 1889, p. 611.

This will certainly offend the ears of a Bengali of today. But this is not inspired either by racial pride or sheer contempt. It is a true picture of the Bengal that Macaulay knew, the Bengal of scheming princes and scheming politicians, of men like Mir Jafar and Nuncomar. And one should not expect a sturdy Englishman to be very respectful to a race of men who could be subjected to foreign rule by a handful of swordsmen and writers coming from across the high seas. And Macaulay's observations, however uncharitable, have to be considered by the social historian of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Bengal. Before we dismiss Macaulay's opinion on the Bengal character as a nasty libel on a race, we may consider what only a decade earlier Raja Rammohun Roy had said about a large section of his countrymen: 'But as regards physical strength, they are upon the whole inferior to the northern nations . . . a great proportion of these (the inhabitants of the cities) are far inferior in point of character to the former class (people of the north), and are very often made tools of the nefarious work of perjury and forgery.'[14] It is true that Macaulay is speaking of the race as a whole and Raja Rammohun Roy, knowing more, is speaking of particular sections. And the truth of Macaulay's remark, if applied to the people about whom he could know anything from his study of eighteenth-century Bengal, is to me beyond question. We are often liable to judge the Bengal of the eighteenth century with knowledge of the Bengal of the nineteenth century. If eighteenth-century Bengal lost her territory and much else with it, in the nineteenth century she had awakened to a sense of that loss and enlightened by the new education achieved a measure of social and intellectual progress, which made her, as a late Governor put it, perhaps a little too rhetorically, the 'Athens of India'.

Nor was Macaulay absolutely indifferent to what virtues the Bengalis possessed. Of the stoic temper of the Bengali he said: 'Nor does he lack a certain kind of courage which is often wanting in his masters. To inevitable evils he is sometimes found to oppose a passive fortitude, such as the stoics attributed to their ideal sage. A European warrior who rushes on a battery of cannon with a loud hurrah will sometimes shriek under the surgeon's knife, and fall into an agony of despair at the sentence of death. But the Bengali who would see his country overrun, his house laid in ashes, his children murdered or dishonoured, without having the spirit to strike one blow, has yet been known to endure torture with the firmness of Mucius, and to mount the scaffold with the steady step and even pulse of Algernon Sydney!'[15]

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[14] *Exposition of the Practical operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India*; see *The English works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Panini Office, Allahabad, 1906, pp. 295–6.

[15] *Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome*, popular edition, 1889, p. 611.

Macaulay on Indian Literature and Indian Education

In India Macaulay's contemptuous remark on Indian literature is mentioned as a glaring instance of his prejudice and of inaccuracy. That Macaulay had no knowledge of Sanskrit literature is true. And it is also true that his estimate of Indian literature, uninformed as it was, was altogether erroneous. But we must remember the context in which he made the pronouncement, and that the Minute on Education, which recommended western education for India, was not the place for a considered literary opinion on Sanskrit, or the Indian vernaculars. His whole purpose was to replace Sanskritic education by English education. And let us remember that Indian educationists themselves demanded this change in education. On this point we have a significant remark in Sivanath Sastri's biography of Ramtanu Lahiri, the Bengali educationist: 'Lord Macaulay sowed his seeds on the prepared soil, and rich was the harvest reaped. The cry they had long since raised for the demolition of everything Oriental to make room for what was Occidental became louder as he infused into them a fresh spirit of reformation.'[16] Only twelve years before Macaulay's Minute on Education, Raja Rammohun Roy told Lord Amherst in a letter (11 December 1823) that 'the Sanskrit language, so difficult that almost a lifetime is necessary for its acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check to the diffusion of knowledge, and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil, is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it.'[17] And some twenty years after Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar said: 'That the Vedante and Sankhya are false systems of philosophy is no more a matter of dispute. . . . Whilst teaching these in the Sanskrit Course we should oppose them by sound philosophy in the English Course to counteract their influence.'[18] So Macaulay's disregard for Sanskrit literature, howsoever unwarrantable as a literary opinion, was in line with the enlightened Indian approach to Oriental learning. It had the other sanction of historical necessity. He understood the intellectual process through which the Indian mind was to bring about the literary Renaissance in the nineteenth century. His Minute on Education (2 February 1835) is an important document of the intellectual history of modern India. It enjoined a system of education for which Raja Rammohun Roy and Derozio had prepared the ground. In fact, what Macaulay said about the role of English in Indian education was for long the considered opinion of most educated Indians on the subject: 'What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of More and

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[16] *Ramtanu Lahiri*, English translation, Sir Roper Lethbridge, 1907, p. 93.

[17] *The English works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Panini Office, Allahabad, 1906, p. 472.

[18] Letter to Dr. Ballantyne printed in B. N. Banerjii's Bengali biography of *Vidyasagar*.

Ascham, our tongue is to the people of India.'[19] And from what he said on the rise of the vernacular literatures in India as a result of this education it is evident that he never believed that English would be the language of the Indian people: 'Among them some persons will be found who will have the inclination and the ability to exhibit European knowledge in the vernacular dialects. This I believe is the only way in which we can raise up a good vernacular literature in this country.'[20] It is true that Indian literature of the nineteenth century was not just a presentation of European knowledge in vernacular. Yet there is no doubt that the European knowledge acquired through the English language was an important stimulus to the literary activity of the nineteenth-century Renaissance.

The Importance of Macaulay's Minutes as Materials for an History of Nineteenth-century India

If the Minute on Education is an important document in the history of Indian education, the minutes on the press laws and the penal system are equally important as materials for a political and judicial history. It is, however, true, that Macaulay recommended a free press for India, not because freedom of the press was the inalienable right of every citizen, but because in India a free press would never be a menace to the security of the State, while it would certainly give it the credit of a fair and liberal administration. No defender of Macaulay and no apologist of his opinion on India can ignore this fact. 'Possessing as we do', he said 'the unquestionable power to interfere, whenever the safety of the State may require it, with overwhelming rapidity and energy, we surely ought not, in quiet times, to be constantly keeping the offensive form and ceremonial of despotism before the eyes of those whom, nevertheless, we permit to enjoy the substance of freedom.'[21] But we should not judge Macaulay's attitude to the Indian press in terms of later ideas on the question. When Macaulay wrote his Minute the Indian press was yet to be that powerful political instrument for the educated Indian which it became after the Mutiny.

The Essays on Clive and Hastings as History

Macaulay's two essays are historical sketches rather than full-fledged history. Yet they have been popular not only because of their literary qualities but also for the severity of some of their judgements on the builders of the Indian empire. All later writings on the British conquest of India, particularly those covering the career of Warren Hastings, have dealt with Macaulay's essays mostly in terms of their literary and dramatic value. The purpose of this paper is to deal with the inaccuracies in Macaulay's accounts as they have been pointed out by later writers on the subject. Later researches have corrected Macaulay's errors and have made a plea for a more respectful estimate of Warren Hastings. But while we see the inaccuracies in Macaulay's details, and they are sometimes important details, and while, moreover, we admit that some of these errors went into his judgement we should be on our guard against repudiating the judgement as a whole on the ground that some of the evidence is unacceptable. For historical truth is not entirely a matter of verifiable evidence. Even after all materials have been collated and weighed there remains a large margin for important differences in perspective. And if the historian does not take upon himself the inferior office of a mere chronicler and chooses to reflect on motives and to pass judgements on actions in terms of a code of ethics his opinions are likely to be controversial. He may appear indifferent to facts. He may be really indifferent to facts. Yet we should be careful in applying a definite law of evidence to the judgements of history. For the evidence may not say everything. H. H. Dodwell speaks of 'the extravagance of Burke and the far less justifiable falsehoods of Macaulay's essay on Warren Hastings'.[22] That Burke was extravagant in calling Hastings 'a weasel and a rat', a 'fraudulent bullock-contractor' and a 'captain-general of iniquity' there is little doubt. And such extravagance is not inappropriate in the rhetoric of a prosecution counsel in a great impeachment. But there may be a measure of extravagance in calling Macaulay's errors 'falsehoods'. Of Macaulay's probity there can be no doubt although the accuracy of his details and the validity of his judgement are not necessarily beyond question. And it would be an error to dismiss Macaulay's views as totally false on the ground that they are based on the false premises of Burke and Mill. For it may be possible that we may make fresh mistakes in our estimate of Hastings or of Impey by way of saving their reputation from what we consider to be the sheer spite of Burke and Macaulay. We may be too mild because others have been too harsh and answer misdirected wrath with an equally misdirected mercy. How evidence alone may not guarantee absolute truth either in details or in judgements is shown by the two well-known books on Nuncomar and Impey written from two different viewpoints, one by Beveridge, and the other by Stephen. We may, moreover, observe that even Roberts who finds Macaulay guilty of serious inaccuracies and misjudgements has said about the Nuncomar episode that 'there can be no doubt that the infliction of the death-penalty was so severe that it amounted to a miscarriage of justice'.[23] And whether Macaulay was right in connecting this miscarriage of justice with political motives is still an open question. And here Macaulay's essays with all their errors have their value in drawing our attention to a side of the question which is likely to be ignored by writers of 'vindications'. The main significance of the two essays, therefore, is in their opinions and judgements which referring, as they do, to a period of Indian history when a foreign power grew from the ruins of a native kingdom are likely to raise controversies. For here it is difficult to get a standard of judgement by which to judge men and actions and there is a tremendous complication of deeds and motives in a political scene where princes sell kingdoms to a trading company and where foreign swordsmen are called upon to protect one native ruler against another and where above all very peculiar forces of history made a group of merchants the builder and ruler of a vast empire. Macaulay decided on a particular standard of judgement and gave his verdict on that basis. And that is his contribution to the historiography of British India. In the writing of imperial history such judgements are helpful even when they are not wholly acceptable.

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[19] G. O. Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, popular edition, 1889, p. 291.

[20] Ibid., p. 298.

[21] Ibid., p. 282.

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[22] *Cambridge History of India*, vi, 1932, p. 404.

[23] Ibid., p. 237.

19. IDEAS OF HISTORY IN INDIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WRITING: A PRELIMINARY STUDY[1]

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Introductory

An attempt to study what Collingwood called the 'second order history' of Indian archaeology must involve some consideration of archaeological thought and practice outside India. Such consideration is beyond the scope of a paper of these dimensions but it may be found elsewhere.[2] However, before turning to the Indian field some general remarks appear necessary in order to explain the conceptual framework of what follows.

Childe has suggested that archaeology originates in two distinct branches of learning—the humanities and natural science,[3] and that it represents a blend of both traditions. The humanist component, he suggests, can be traced back to the Renaissance, whilst the scientific can hardly find expression until Darwin's vindication of evolution. I would like, at the risk of over-simplification, to propose that these two components have a very wide significance, and that historically they may be taken as producing two distinct branches of archaeology, aptly called by Hawkes 'text-aided' and 'text-free'.[4] It is not only in India that 'text-aided' archaeology can be shown to have already assumed its classic form by 1859, whilst it is common to all fields of study that 'text-free' archaeology only attained an independent status after that date. The history of archaeology since 1859 has been one in which the basic assumptions and techniques of 'text-free' *prehistory* have steadily been more widely adopted by 'text-aided' *archaeology*. In this process they have been modified and developed and at every stage reciprocal influences may also be observed at work. Indeed, the methods and techniques which are today commonly thought of as peculiarly archaeological appear to derive largely from prehistory, whilst those of the humanistic component (epigraphy, numismatics, etc.) are sometimes belittled by the archaeologist.

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[1] When this paper was being prepared, *Ancient India* No. 9, 1953, had not yet been received in London and I was thus unable to use its contents. Had I been able to do so, and particularly had I been able to refer to Sourindranath Roy's admirable paper on 'Indian Archaeology from Jones to Marshall' and Ghosh's 'Fifty years of the Archaeological Survey of India', which give between them a detailed summary of the history of archaeological research in India, I should have been able to concentrate more upon the ideas of history and less upon the history itself. However, as my aim throughout was different from that of these two papers, and as I was seeking to interpret the idea of history which lay behind the various workers, I have thought it better to retain my text in its original form. At the time it was expected that another contributor would deal with the ideas of history in Indian art-historical writing, and thus I excluded from my scope a number of important works which otherwise must have been covered. Among them I may mention the many contributions of Coomaraswamy, and Vincent Smith's *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*.

[2] In particular in G. Daniel, *One Hundred Years of Archaeology* (Cambridge, 1950); V. G. Childe, 'The Constitution of Archaeology as a Science', from *Science, Medicine and History* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 3–15; S. Lloyd, *Foundations in the Dust* (1947).

[3] V. G. Childe, loc. cit., p. 1.

[4] C. Hawkes, 'Archaeological Theory and Method', *Am. Anth.* 56 (1954), pp. 155–68.

Be this as it may, the basic assumptions of the evolutionary hypothesis of Darwin profoundly influenced the development of prehistory and 'text-aided' archaeology alike. And we may say for archaeology as Marett said for the sister science of anthropology, 'Reject the Darwinian point of view and you must reject archaeology also.'[5] For this reason I shall devote a few lines to a consideration of these basic assumptions and their adoption by prehistorians.

For the purpose of this paper *Prehistory* is used for 'text-free' archaeology and *Indian archaeology* for 'text-aided'. The importance of this distinction is more than historical and methodological, for the content of the studies varies as much as the method. 'Text-aided' archaeology in India is the archaeology of Indian civilization with all that it entails (using 'civilization' in the sense of Morgan's ethnic stage[6]) whilst 'text-free' prehistory becomes in its earlier phase the study of early and Middle Stone Age assemblages in their geological contexts, and in its later the study of Late Stone Age assemblages and neolithic, chalcolithic, bronze, and iron age remains. These phases correspond in general with the archaeology of hunting and collecting and barbarian groups respectively.

If any two books may be said to have contributed to the birth of prehistory they are Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (first edition, 1832) and Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859). The evolutionary hypothesis released a flood of new ideas and directly stimulated Lyell's *Antiquity of Man* (1863) and the works of Lubbock and Tylor. The scope of its applications grew ever wider; Tylor applied the evolutionary hypothesis to ethnology, and Morgan and Engels to the history of ideas of government, the family and property. So widespread did it become that the cautious Huxley expostulated after the meeting of the British Association of 1868: 'The only fault was the terrible "Darwinismus" which spread over the section and crept out when you least expected it, even in Fergusson's lecture on "Buddhist Temples".'[7] Thus within a decade evolution not only gave birth to prehistory but even penetrated Indian archaeology.

What were the fundamental postulates of the early prehistorians? First must stand the Darwinian hypothesis of natural selection leading to evolution. Next the geological principle of superposition or stratigraphy with its corollary of type-fossils acting as indicators of the relative age of deposits. Thirdly, the principle of the geographical distribution of species in variable environments; and lastly, Lyell's great principle that 'the past must be explained by the present, unless good cause be shown to the contrary'—the principle of existing causes. Translated into archaeological terms these assumptions find expression in Tylor:

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[5] R. R. Marett, *Anthropology* (1912), p. 8.

[6] L. H. Morgan, *Ancient Society* (1876).

[7] T. H. Huxley, *Life and Letters* (1900), i, 297.

> 'The thesis I venture to sustain, within limits, is simply this, that the savage state in some measure represents an early condition of mankind, out of which the higher culture has gradually developed or evolved, the result showing that, on the whole, progress has far prevailed over relapse' (p. 32). 'History within its proper field, and ethnography over a wider range, combine to show that institutions which can best hold their own in the world gradually supersede the less fit ones, and that this incessant conflict determines the general resultant course of culture' (p. 69). 'The master key to the investigation of man's primaeval condition is held by prehistoric archaeology' (p. 58). 'That the tendency of culture has been similar throughout the existence of human society, and that we may fairly judge from its known historic course what its prehistoric course is likely to have been, is a theory entitled to precedence as a fundamental principle of ethnographic research' (p. 33).[8]

Such were the basic assumptions of the anthropologists and prehistorians of the mid-nineteenth century. They continue to exercise great influence on archaeological writing even though it is today fashionable in some countries to decry their first formulators as 'unilinear evolutionists'. We have stressed them because it seems that upon them the new conception of 'the whole history of man' arose, and whilst it is not possible here to touch upon the further development of archaeological ideas outside India, this much will become clear, that the tremendous advances in Indian studies from Jones to Prinsep and Cunningham are part of the same process which led from Lamarck to Darwin. Thus the history of Indian archaeology must be seen as one part of the rise in the western world of that new pattern of thought whose birth we have outlined.

Returning to India we shall discern four main periods of activity. These are the *Early* (up to 1850), the *Cunningham* (1850–1900), the *Marshall* (1900–44), and the period of *Wheeler* and of *Independence* (1944 to the present). We shall see that the archaeology of Indian civilization arose during the *Early* period and reached a definite pattern by 1850. This pattern was embodied by Cunningham into the Archaeological Survey. Indian prehistory, as a systematic study, appears only after 1850, and throughout the two subsequent periods it is largely outside the Archaeological Department. With the *Marshall* period the scope of research is widened and assumes a new character, while in the fourth period the stage is set for the full utilization of the research techniques evolved in Europe and the Middle East.

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[8] Sir E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, fourth edition (1903).

The Early Period

The intellectual environment which made possible the study of Indian civilization and gave birth to archaeology is associated with the name of Sir William Jones. Perhaps the first attempt to use the evidence of archaeological studies for general historical purposes is contained in Maurice's *Indian Antiquities* (London, 1794). The sub-title of these seven volumes states that they are

> 'dissertations relative to the ancient geography, primeval theology, grand code of civil laws, government and profound literature of Hindoostan compared throughout with the religions, laws, etc., of Persia, Greece, Egypt . . . The whole being introductory to the history of Hindoostan upon a comprehensive scale.'

The work includes pictures of temples from Tanjore, Puri, Deogarh, etc. besides Egyptian, Greek, and even Mexican examples. In discussing triads and trinities sculpture from Elephanta is illustrated, as is a seal of Indian type from Siberia. A curious touch is added by the plan of Stonehenge which introduces a section upon the 'Indian origin of the Druids'.

Maurice's work presupposes earlier research. For example, the caves at Elephanta had already been measured and planned by Ives' 'late ingenious friend, Mr. Thomas' before 1754.[9] Indeed, the contacts of European navigators with this site go back to the sixteenth century. But it is only with the nineteenth century that any volume of research begins. The recording of sites, particularly those with monumental remains, advanced apace. In the early years of the century Salt and Erskine wrote studies of Kanheri and Elephanta. In the Andhra coast region Col. Colin Mackenzie as early as 1797 visited and later excavated the stupa site of Amaravati, and compiled a mass of unpublished notes and drawings, which are still of great potential interest. Buchanan recorded and even drew numbers of monuments during his tours. Among the illustrations was perhaps the first record of the *Gommateśvara* of Sravana Belgola. Tod in his work in Rajasthan noticed several sites. Yet the real impetus for research came from the remarkable James Prinsep, who was in truth the presiding genius of the early period. Cunningham and Falconer both stressed his 'burning, irrepressible enthusiasm' which permitted him to accomplish the work of a dozen men. Thomas noticed his wide, scientific curiosity. Fergusson wrote in 1845, 'Had Mr. James Prinsep lived to continue for a few years longer the researches which he commenced and continued with such success, he probably would have succeeded in raising the veil which still shrouds in obscurity the antiquities of India.'[10] The reading of the Indian scripts is a remarkable story. Its culmination was reached in Prinsep's deciphering of the *Brahmi lipi* in 1834, a discovery which closely parallels in time Rawlinson's reading of the cuneiform.

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[9] E. Ives, *Voyage from England to India, etc.* (London, 1773).

The pattern of research which Prinsep created by his example may be recognized in his *Indian Antiquities* (London, 1858), a posthumous edition of his historic, palaeographic and numismatic essays. In both the collecting and reading of inscriptions and coins Prinsep's mantle fell upon Cunningham's shoulders, but many others were inspired to assist. Thus Bird made a thorough record of the West Indian cave inscriptions, and it was the interest aroused by the publication of his *Historical Researches* (Bombay, 1847) and Fergusson's early work on the caves which led to the formation of the Bombay Cave Commission in 1848 to investigate the history of the caves and undertake their preservation. In the north-west of India and Afghanistan Masson recorded many sites, visiting for the first time the great mount of Harappa in 1826. The fruits of his work are contained in his notes to the Bengal Asiatic Society and in *Ariana Antiqua* (London, 1841) where he contributed a description of the sites (mainly stupas) he had excavated, whilst H. H. Wilson wrote a study of his coin finds and ancient geography. Masson's discoveries at Begram drew the attention of scholars to the astonishing Indo-Greek coinage and 'opened a new page in the history of Greek Art'. Mention must be made of one more work of this period, the *Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus* (London, 1834) of Ram Raz, a magistrate of Bangalore. Although this work is concerned more with theoretical problems of the interpretation of the *Šilpa śāstra* it deserves notice as being the earliest archaeological work by an Indian.

Many others deserve mention; Court, Burnes, Ventura, and Gerard all collected coins and recorded sites in the north-west of India and Afghanistan. Captain Cautley discovered the remains of a large settlement at Behat near Saharanpur. His excavations are among the earliest in India to be applied to a non-monumental site.[11]

Fired with the enthusiasm of Prinsep, Tod was led to write:

> 'Let not the antiquary forget the old cities of East and West of the Jamna, in the desert and in the Punjab of which I have given lists, where his toil will be richly rewarded. I possess bags-full of these Indo-gangetic Gentry.'

He goes on to suggest the need for the formation of 'station branch-committees of the Asiatic Society' to call for the latent talent of many a young officer.[12] A similar plea appeared in 1853 in the *Journal of the Archaeological Society of Delhi*.

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[10] J. Fergusson, *Rock Cut Temples of India* (London, 1845).

[11] *J.A.S.B.*, iii (1834), pp. 43–4, 221–7.

[12] J. Tod, quoted by J. Prinsep, *Indian Antiquities* (London, 1858), pp. 108–9.

If we are to summarize the achievements of the early period we shall see that they lie mainly in the fields of numismatics, epigraphy, and the recording of monumental sites. Such excavations as took place were almost solely aimed at revealing structure or extracting the relics from the heart of stupas. Such were those of Ventura or Masson. The whole period is dominated by the enthusiasm of Prinsep, who inspired the collection of those materials upon which Indian archaeology was to rest. The principal workers were military officers and already the relationship of military engineering and surveying to archaeology was established in the person of Mackenzie. These officers either treated antiquarian research as a hobby, which their field campaigns permitted, or as an integral part of their own duties. In Cautley the rival interests of archaeology and geology were already evident. These three callings, military service, engineering, and geology, were to play an important role in the researches of the next period.

The Cunningham Period

Cunningham is remembered as the creator of the Indian Archaeological Survey. This is rightly the aspect which the earlier history *Revealing India's Past* (London, 1939) stressed. From our point of view, however, it is not so much the Department which deserves notice as Cunningham's own ideas on Indian Archaeology. Looking back to the days before 1834 he writes that in that period 'our archaeological researches were chiefly literary'. 1834 was the date of a 'new era'. Since then, under Prinsep's inspiration, a new spirit was abroad. Cunningham contrasts the 'closet or scholastic archaeologists' of the old days with what Prinsep called the 'field archaeologists' or 'travelling antiquarians' who had now appeared. What were the qualities of such a field archaeologist? His answer may be found in his own work, but something may be gauged from his comments on Mackenzie, 'an ardent and successful collector . . . but he was not an archaeologist. He could dig up and make drawings of the splendid sculptures of Dharanikotta, but he could neither restore the buildings nor translate the inscriptions.'[13] In spite of this Mackenzie collected more than 8,000 inscriptions from southern India!

Again in the instructions Cunningham gave to his assistants he wrote:

> 'Archaeology is not limited to broken sculptures, old buildings and mounds of ruins, but includes everything that belonged to the world's history . . . Architectural remains naturally form the most prominent branch of archaeology. . . . But our researches should be extended to all ancient remains whatever that will help to illustrate the manners and customs of former times.'

He goes on to say that not only should his workers record evidence of sites and ruins, and gather together coins, sculptures or inscriptions, but they should also record finds of stone implements and of dolmens, cromlechs or barrows. Even this is not all: their tours offer an excellent opportunity to study the many ancient forms of objects which are still in use today, and they should not be above observing the sort of plough in use, the other implements of agriculture, the types of house and systems of irrigation, etc.[14] Here indeed was a comprehensive account of the scope of archaeology!

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[13] *A.S.R.*, i (1871), p. vii.

Cunningham was aware of the great accumulation of facts and of the urgent need for conservation of the monuments. If the moment has to be gained Government must recognize its responsibilities. For each new fact if put in its place was one of the 'fossil fragments of the great skeleton of lost Indian history'.

From our point of view one group of Cunningham's writings forms the logical outcome of the various trends we have seen in the early period. It includes the first volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, the *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (Calcutta, 1877), the *Coins of India* (London, 1891), and the *Book of Indian Eras* (Calcutta, 1883). Another group comprises the results of his own field work. The extensive tours he undertook produced the volumes of the *Archaeological Survey Reports* in one of which was published for the first time a typical seal from Harappa. The survey reports also contain his analysis of the Gupta style of temple architecture, observations on ancient geography, on ethnology, etc. The practical experience of the tours also resulted in the pioneer work *Ancient Geography of India* (London, 1871), which made available to historians the geographical framework of Buddhist India. Next, there are his reports on the detailed study of three great sites: Sanchi (*The Bhilsa Topes*, London, 1854), *Bharhut* (London, 1879), and Bodh Gaya (*Maha Bodhi*, London, 1892). The Bharhut report shows archaeological photography at a level it has rarely since attained in India.

Such, in brief, was the many-sided activity of Cunningham in the field of the archaeology of Indian civilization. His impress lies heavily upon all subsequent workers. It may be useful, however, to notice before we continue some of the negative aspects of his work. His concern was in the first place for inscriptional or numismatic evidence, and afterwards for architectural or sculptural monuments. He interested himself in the ancient geography of Northern India mainly so as to identify ancient place-names. He left no reports of the excavation of settlement sites, great or small; and he seems in practice to have been largely oblivious of objects other than sculptures or relic caskets. Thus his work still lacked, in practice, those aspects which archaeology today has shown itself peculiarly suited to study. Further, although he rated Mackenzie, his own efforts at Sarnath or Sanchi were not beyond censure. He tells us that at Stupa 2 at Sanchi

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[14] *A.S.R.*, iii (1873), pp. iv ff.

within two hours of commencing work he had discovered the relics. Incidentally he completed the destruction which Johnson had begun in 1822. Nor was his restoration of the shrine at Bodh Gaya beyond criticism.[15]

Cunningham was not without supporters. Among his contemporaries few are more memorable than James Fergusson, an architect by training, who founded the systematic study of Indian architecture. Fergusson early made use of the notes and superb drawings compiled by Mackenzie and already by 1845 was able to publish a description of all the known examples of ancient building. From that time forward he added to the store of pictorial records and his work may be said to have culminated in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876) and *Cave Temples of India* (1880). The latter book was made in conjunction with James Burgess. The method he employed was well founded: to attempt to relate all the buildings of any group one to the other by an analysis of style and distinctive characteristics and anchor these sequences to dated examples. Cunningham adopted the technique in his study of Stupas or Gupta temples.

Contrasting his own work with that of Dr. Bird, Fergusson writes:

> '*His* conclusions are drawn principally from the inscriptions and written authorities, while mine have been arrived at almost entirely from a critical survey of the whole series, and a careful comparison of one cave with another, and with the different structural buildings in their neighbourhood, the dates of which are, at least approximately, known.'[16]

In retrospect he puts his aim quite clearly:

> 'What I have attempted to do during the last forty years has been to apply to Indian architecture the same principles of archaeological science which are universally adopted . . . in every country in Europe.'

Again his methods were set out with clarity in his *Illustrated Handbook of Architecture, being a concise and popular account of the different styles of architecture prevailing in all ages and countries* (London, 1855), and shown in mature form in his *History of Architecture in all countries from Earliest Times* (London, 1893). This latter work occupies to this day an important place in the comparative study of architecture. A more adventurous, but no less important, work was *Tree and Serpent Worship* (1873). In this the author not only set out a bold hypothesis of the interconnections of Indian and Mediterranean ideas but attempted to show the expression of mythology in Indian art. Finally we may notice his *Rude Stone Monuments of many Lands* (1872). In this the architect assembled a mass of factual information concerning those monuments which are often called 'megalithic'. A chapter is devoted to India and it is noteworthy for its author's almost unique plea for the consideration of the Indian monuments as historic rather than prehistoric. In short, Fergusson made a great contribution to our knowledge of Indian civilization. He seems to have had little time for other aspects of history, but within his own sphere he was a keen and unprejudiced observer. The broad basis of his comparisons of Rude Stone Monuments has led to keen criticism and neglect of his ideas. Of his contact with Darwinism mention has already been made. His views on wider issues of history appear to have been derived from Mill. He writes:

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[15] J. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876), p. 79.

[16] J. Fergusson, *Rock Cut Temples of India* (1845), p. 2.

> 'Sculpture, in India, may fairly claim to rank, in power of expression, with medieval sculpture in Europe, and to tell its tale of rise and decay with equal distinctness; but it is interesting as having that curious Indian peculiarity of being written in decay. . . . The Indian story is that of a backward decline.'[17]

Thus for him sculpture, as also he claimed did literature and political history, revealed a steady decay that had continued to the time of his writing.

Of the other contemporaries of Cunningham we need say little. Carlleyle and Beglar have left little writing beyond the perfunctory accounts of their tours. Carlleyle indeed carried out extensive exploration and excavation in the Kaimur ranges. The fruits of this work lie to this day, half forgotten, in the British Museum, but any written report which may have existed had already disappeared when Vincent Smith wrote his paper on the 'Pygmy Flints' some fifty years ago.[18] Of Maisey little need be said, nor of Markham Kittoe who held the post of 'archaeological enquirer' to the Government for several years about 1850.

With the retirement of Cunningham in 1885 the activities of the Department were confined largely to epigraphy and the study of architecture. Under the direction of Burgess the publications of the New Imperial Series contained brilliant studies of the Muslim and Hindu architecture of the Deccan and Western India, whilst Hultzsch, Bühler and Rice made notable contributions to the collection and publication of inscriptions. But outside these channels the Department almost ceased to contribute to the progress of archaeological research: nor as yet did there appear any evidence of a new approach to archaeological techniques comparable to those which were appearing in other parts of the world.

Looking back over Indian archaeology during the Cunningham period we are impressed perhaps above all by the close personal contact of Fergusson and Cunningham with the soil of India and with her monuments and living culture. In 1845 Fergusson could write of his architectural descriptions: 'I have copied word for word . . . the notes I made on the spot and in the caves themselves.'[19] This fact gave him an objectivity which later writers on architecture have often lacked. 'My authorities', he writes, 'have been mainly the imperishable records on rocks or on sculptures and carvings, which necessarily represented at the time the faith and feeling of those who executed them.'[20] In later years, as the Department grew in stature, this earthy intimacy was harder to obtain. The camera and the hurried photograph replaced the laborious study which lay behind many of Fergusson's sketches, and with it was often lost that balanced vision which lay behind Fergusson's words.

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[17] J. Fergusson (1876), pp. 36–38.

[18] V. Smith, *Ind. Ant.*, xxxv (1906), pp. 185–95.

> 'Greece and Rome are dead and have passed away, and we are living so completely in the midst of modern Europe, that we cannot get outside to contemplate it as a whole. But India is a cosmos in itself. . . . Every problem of . . . ethnography can be studied here more easily than anywhere else; every art has its living representative.'[21]

Thus he summed up the early approach to the study of Indian civilization.

Prehistory up to 1900

We have traced the history of Indian archaeology from its beginnings, through the climax under Cunningham, into the last decades of the nineteenth century. We have seen how, through the medium of Cunningham, the Government had become in a way identified with this branch of archaeology and how when government support dwindled research also narrowed and stagnated. We now turn to another aspect of archaeology in India which from the start was largely independent of government support and which parallels to a remarkable degree its European counterpart. This aspect is that of prehistory which, we have claimed, only developed as a systematic study after 1859. In India there had been several finds of stone artifacts before this date. As early as 1842 a Dr. Primrose had found a 'bagful' of jasper, agate and chalcedony 'knives and arrowheads' during the clearing of his garden in Lingsugur (Raichur Dt), and in 1853 Evans published an account of worked flints from the neighbourhood of Jubbulpore.

Other classes of prehistoric antiquities also received attention. As early as 1821 a hoard of copper objects was discovered at Bithur near Kanpur, and in 1829 another at Fatehgarh (U.P.) included the famous swords. In the south J. Babington published in 1823 an account of the Pandoo Coolies which had already been noticed by Maria Graham (1811). He was soon followed by other reports of graves from Congreve and Newbold. Thenceforward a considerable literature was to appear upon the subject of the stone cist or circle graves. The mysterious ash mounds of Bellary and the North Karnataka region were first recorded by the geologist Newbold (1836). From 1850 onwards a host of collectors, almost all amateur, reported finds of stone artifacts from Baluchistan to Assam and from the North West Frontier to Madras. Some of their collections found their way into British or Indian museums, some disappeared, but we must recall that few of them were trained either as archaeologists or geologists and nearly all their collections were from the surface. In these circumstances reports of the standard of Rivett-Carnac's upon his Banda neolithic finds are very rare. Among them all one name in particular is memorable; that of Robert Bruce Foote.

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[19] J. Fergusson (1845), p. 62.

[20] J. Fergusson (1876), Preface.

[21] J. Fergusson (1876), Introduction, p. 4.

Bruce Foote arrived in India in 1858 and as a geologist already possessed much of the theoretical and scientific knowledge which we have seen to underlie prehistoric archaeology. He was clearly familiar with developments in Europe and was excited by the discoveries already made in India. With his report of the discovery in 1863 of stone implements in lateritic deposits in Madras a new stage was reached in Indian prehistory. Thereafter, during his thirty-three years of field work with the Geological Survey, wherever he went he made important discoveries. In 1887 he was already able to summarize the prehistory of South India in these words:

> 'In South India, up to the present day, three grades or periods are known to have been passed through by the old inhabitants: the Rude Stone period, the Polished Stone period and the Iron period. A Bronze or Copper period has not, so far, been traced in the South, and iron had been introduced among the people living in the Southern Deccan, and was probably manufactured by them at the same time that they were still making and using polished stone.'[22]

There is little that need be added to this after more than half a century. Finally, after years of study of his vast collections, in his *Notes on the ages and distribution of the antiquities* (Madras, 1916) he was able to produce a monumental reconstruction of the various stages of prehistoric culture of India. It is important to remember that excavation played almost no part in Foote's researches. His methods were those of topographical observation, surface collection on a large scale, and typological analysis. Reinforced by his unmatched observation of the environment and of human needs in India he essayed to carry this analysis into the final stages of functional interpretation. If there is any one aspect of his writings which now needs revision it is that which deals with historic periods. On matters of history (in its narrow sense) Foote is silent, and many of the sites and objects which he assigned to the Later Iron Age can now be seen to belong to the Early Historic or even Medieval periods. One other limitation of his

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[22] R. B. Foote, *J.A.S.B.*, lvi, pt. 2 (1887), p. 260.

Notes deserves comment. He often makes his statements in a general manner when they are based upon material and observations of a more limited region. It is only by bearing this limitation in mind that the full value of his later, synthetic, writings can be appreciated.

Among other prehistorians two deserve notice. They both have left writings concerning their excavations or researches into later prehistory. The first is Col. Meadows Taylor, yet another many-sided soldier, combining in himself skill as a writer, painter, historian, and archaeologist. He was stationed for many years in Hyderabad and during this time noticed many 'cairns, cromlechs and kistvaens' some of which he either excavated or caused to be excavated. He has left us a number of clear drawings of the graves, of their cross-sections and of the objects contained in them. These, together with the accompanying descriptive text, comprise some of the clearest records of archaeological excavations in India before 1945, and are almost unique among the archaeological records of their time (1850–60). Doubtless they are testimony of the same military engineering which guided Pitt-Rivers. Of Taylor's ideas we need say little. He subscribed to the belief, often held at the time, that these graves were the relics of a Celtic or Scythian people and as such were related to similar graves outside India. This belief did not however prevent his reading an excellent paper on Indian prehistory at the British Association Meeting at Norwich in 1868. At about the same time as Taylor was in Hyderabad J. W. Breeks was Commissioner for the Nilgiri District. He has left an account of his ethnographic work in *Primitive tribes and monuments of the Nilghiries* (1873), and one chapter is devoted to a description of the graves and their contents. This bold juxtaposition of archaeological and ethnographic material has not, however, precluded quite unwarranted speculations on the antiquity of the graves by later writers.

From the beginning prehistoric studies have been closely associated with geologists. W. T. and H. F. Blanford, V. Ball, W. King, T. J. Newbold, and R. B. Foote are early examples of this connection, which has continued to the present day. This interesting fact parallels the association of surveyors and military engineers with the study of monumental remains.

The Marshall Period

The dark days for government-supported archaeology which followed the retirement of Burgess in 1889 came to an end shortly after the appointment of Lord Curzon as Viceroy. Curzon in two addresses to the Asiatic Society of Bengal (in 1899 and 1900) clearly recognized the different environments of India and Europe and the greatly added weight of responsibility which fell on Government to protect and preserve the ancient monuments and to further the study of India's past. He accordingly took measures to fulfil this demand. The result was the appointment of Sir

John Marshall as Director-General of Archaeology. The thirty years of Marshall's direction saw an unprecedented growth in the scope of the Department and its work. They saw, also, a tremendous change in the recruitment and training of personnel. Marshall has told the story of this growth in his own words.[23] However, we would stress that the activities of the Department between 1902 and 1934 appear to be so intimately connected with Sir John Marshall that from some points of view a critical assessment of its achievements and its limitations may also be considered as an assessment of its Director's achievements and limitations.

In the first of the new series of annual reports,[24] Marshall wrote of Burgess that he 'made no pretence of conducting a comprehensive and connected survey of the Indian continent by a system of simultaneous progress in its various parts'. He was indeed 'a specialist in his tastes'. The policy Marshall adopted was clearly designed to introduce such progress on as wide a front as possible. It quoted the words of Curzon:

> 'All are ordered parts of any scientific scheme of antiquarian work. . . . It is, in my judgement, equally our duty to dig and to discover, to classify, reproduce and describe, to copy and to decipher, and to cherish and conserve.'[25]

Thus government policy found expression in Marshall's labours, and Indian Archaeology became in all its branches aligned to British Imperial policy. Yet within that front the various sections occupied by such different aspects as conservation, museums, epigraphy, numismatics, etc., were to become ever more clearly defined, and whilst they do not cease to play their parts, they may now be clearly differentiated from the more specifically archaeological techniques of exploration and excavation. In this circumstance we shall henceforward concern ourselves only with these more limited aspects as a preparation for judging the ideas of history which they reveal.

In the field of Indian civilization this period produced results which were important but uneven. We shall see that exploration was largely confined to areas outside the political frontiers of India, whilst excavation appears to have been carried out without due regard for the techniques which came into vogue in Europe. We shall also notice that excavation was largely reserved for religious sites, whilst settlements (either great or small) less often received attention.

Religious Sites. A large number of (primarily Buddhist) sites were excavated. The results of these excavations may be stated in general to be the acquisition of pieces of sculpture and the clearance and conservation of structural remains. At the most fruitful they could fill a museum and turn a barren field into the ghost of its former self—as at Sarnath. A number of other finds were thought important enough for adequate description, such as the Kanishka casket from Shahji-ki-Dheri, sealings, coins, inscriptions, etc. The methods employed for dating the various structures revealed are also fairly consistent. Inscriptions (or rarely coins) are used; the inscriptional evidence usually relies upon palaeography. Sometimes the style of sculptural remains is used as a further indication, sometimes peculiarities of the building style (i.e. size of brick). In rare cases reference is made to 'level' often as a sort of magical datum which can establish relative age.[26] The principle of stratigraphy which had already been employed with success outside India rarely finds mention, and its absence leads to really serious confusion. For example, the floors observed around the Aśoka columns at both Sanchi and Sarnath were not followed across the site, or even to the neighbouring buildings, or if they were no drawing or adequate report of them has been published. Another failing, to which we shall refer below, was that 'type-fossils', in the form of objects of most frequent occurrence, were not studied. Taken together these observations give ample ground for the cynic's estimate of the excavations as providing visible tokens of governmental interest rather than less tangible results in the field of ideas.

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[23] See Sir J. G. Cumming, *Revealing India's Past* (1939), pp. 13 ff.

[24] *A.R.A.S.I.* (1902–3), p. 2.

[25] Ibid., p. 12.

Settlement Sites. Excavations of settlements were notably fewer although their scale was sometimes large and the results were spectacular. The first site chosen was Charsadda. Later, work was started at Bhita, Patna (in the Bulandi Bagh), and Taxila, and finally at the great Indus Valley sites of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. As with the religious sites a certain pattern of technique and results emerges from a comparative study. At best they produced monumental reports on all the classes of object discovered and adequate accounts of structures, but in every case they failed to show sufficient attention to the stratigraphical relationship of the finds. Thus at Taxila a study of almost any class of object leads to perplexing discrepancies. For example, stone toilet trays from the lowest ('Greek') strata at Sirkap have been authoritatively stated to be 'hardly of an earlier date than the second century A.D.'[27] whilst the same strata produced many Saka and even stray Kushan coins. The difficulties in excavating these sites are not denied, but they are still a challenge to the excavator's probity and skill. In particular it is felt that insufficient use was made of objects of most common occurrence, as type-fossils, and that no pottery sequence or sequence of, for example, terra-cottas has emerged from so much work. Such a sequence if it could be once constructed would provide a basis for the chronology of the Early Historic Sites of North India. Also on the negative side we must notice that the sites chosen were all large cities. But the prime failure was in not developing vertical as well as horizontal excavation. The failure in this respect of the otherwise magnificent work done at Taxila and Mohenjo Daro can only be deplored.

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[26] For example *A.R.A.S.I.* (1914–15), pp. 108–9.

[27] H. Buchthal, 'The Western Aspects of Gandhara Sculpture', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, xxxi (1945), p. 26.

Exploration. The surface survey of sites made little systematic advance inside India. On the northern and western frontiers, however, the tremendous genius of Stein set a standard which could well have been emulated. The story of his expeditions is well known and we shall not repeat it, but in passing we may dwell upon the memorable words in which he summarized the aim of his Central Asian work:

> 'To secure materials that would help us to recover this interesting chapter of lost history, and to interpret it rightly, it was not enough to conduct excavations and to arrange for the deposition of what official language styles the "archaeological proceeds" in museums. It was at least equally important that an exact and detailed record should be kept of all observations made on the ground. . . .'[28]

The long list of Stein's publications and the extraordinary range of his archaeological interests amply repaid the encouragement and support which the department gave him.

There is one other aspect of the Marshall period which deserves attention, for it was during this period that a number of Indian workers were trained and rose to senior positions in both the Department and the State Departments. It would be interesting to trace the ideas of history which these workers displayed, but unfortunately it is a subject in itself and beyond our present scope. It is however evident that M. S. Vats, Daya Ram Sahni, K. N. Diksit, N. G. Majumdar or R. D. Banerji deserve attention, no less than G. Yazdani or M. H. Krishna, and that they open an important new chapter in Indian Archaeology.

We have seen that the period, with all its activity, produced little advance in archaeological research techniques. At a time when outside India these techniques were undergoing rapid change and serving to produce culture-sequences, as a means to refined dating, as well as many new types of information on both history and prehistory, Indian archaeology made little advance. Nowhere was the failure more marked than in the field of prehistory. If we leave aside the very considerable work done on the Indus Valley civilization, the Department did scarcely any systematic research. Prehistory was largely left to amateurs, among whom we may mention Todd, Munn, Richards, Cammiade, and Gordon. The work of Rea in South India, which showed considerable promise, was never pursued. The two notable advances which pointed the way for further research were neither sufficiently sustained to provide the foundation they sought. M. C. Burkitt examined the large collections made by Cammiade in the Kistna basin and in two short papers[29] attempted to synthesize geological and archaeological evidence. The Yale-Cambridge Expedition of 1935 was a more ambitious project. The results were extremely important in that they attempted, for the first time, to relate Stone Age assemblages to the Glacial sequence of North West India. It is, however, frightening to consider the wealth of speculation which has been based upon the necessarily slender materials of this one expedition.

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[28] Sir M. A. Stein, *Ancient Khotan* (1907), p. ix.

If we seek to discover the factors which motivated archaeological research in India at this time, we are forced to conclude that within the Department the administrative machine took precedence over ideas of history. Next, that too often the study of religious sites and of those antiquities which could claim a place in art history took precedence over the more mundane aspects of culture. When some sort of historical questioning was linked to the machinery the results could be really important, as with Stein's journeys or Marshall's own work at Taxila or Mohenjo Daro; but a great deal of effort was spent in producing slight results, or if further evidence was at one time available its importance was not recognized and it has since been destroyed. The outcome of work at Sanchi and Sarnath was of this sort. Indian archaeology did not learn the full lesson of Petrie; it produced no Pitt-Rivers and no Woolley; it lagged behind in the more narrowly archaeological techniques and thus failed to develop the ideas those techniques engendered; it produced no Haverfield or Collingwood and before 1945 the effects of Collingwood's 'Baconian revolution'[30] were absolutely unfelt.

Outside the Department several workers deserve especial mention. F. J. Richards developed an approach to Indian history which was particularly felicitous. It was based upon a study of geographic, demographic, and ethnographic factors and insisted that in the Indian context archaeology must also fit into the pattern. In certain of his writings Richards was also influenced by the Diffusionists. Although he has left only a slender volume of written work it is in its way without second, and must influence the future course of archaeological thinking in India. The contribution of A. Foucher is of a very different order. He also sought to make a synthesis or 'logical co-ordination' of geographical and art-historical materials with our knowledge of early Buddhism. 'Buddhism', he wrote, 'is a historical fact; only it has not yet been completely incorporated into history.' Although much of his writing deserves rather to be considered as dealing with the history of art or religion, in certain works he showed himself as an original archaeological thinker. In his *Vieille route de l'Inde* (Paris, 1942) and *Notes sur la géographie ancienne du Gandhara* (Hanoi, 1902) this aspect predominates; whilst in his collaborative report upon the sculptures of Sanchi (London, 1939) he sought to develop the ideas of Fergusson and Cunningham with reference to a far wider grasp of the literature of early Buddhism than these earlier writers could possibly have possessed. Another French worker whose contribution was mainly in the field of South Indian architecture was Jouveau Dubreuil, who is also remembered for his work on Pallava history. No mention has been made of Vincent Smith who, although primarily a historian, showed himself to be a scholastic archaeologist of no mean order. His two papers on 'Pygmy Flints' and 'Copper Implements'[31] showed his powers of analysis, as did his early report upon the 'Jain Stupa at Mathura'.[32] His historical writings show a profound knowledge of the archaeological reports which related to the early history of India.

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[29] M. C. Burkitt and L. A. Cammiade, 'Fresh Light on the Stone Ages in S.E. India', *Antiquity*, iv (1930); M. C. Burkitt, L. A. Cammiade and F. J. Richards, 'Climatic Changes in S.E. India', *Geological Magazine*, lxix (1932).

[30] R. G. Collingwood, *Autobiography* (1939), pp. 124–5.

It remains to notice three attempts to synthesize archaeological evidence in the Marshall period. In Volume I of the *Cambridge History of India* (1922) archaeological source material is used in many chapters, but only in Marshall's masterly summary, 'The Monuments of Ancient India' (chapter XXVI), can it be said to play a leading role. Yet in this chapter prehistoric archaeology occupies only 1,500 words and in the later sections the main emphasis is on art styles, schools of sculpture and architecture. A similar bias is noticeable in Codrington's *Ancient India* (1926). Here prehistory, including the Iron Age, is limited to about 1,000 words, and the Indus Civilization to a further 2,000. The main body of this admirable essay is again centred upon architectural and sculptural monuments, although at every stage the author has sought to integrate the monuments into their historical context. None the less, both these works spring more nearly from Fergusson than from contemporary archaeological synthetic writing outside India. A third synthetic work is Panchanan Mitra's *Prehistoric India* (1923, second edition Calcutta, 1927). The author's admirable scheme is marred by the wealth of his speculations and very limited first-hand use of archaeological materials. This leads, for example, to an effort to superimpose the divisions of European prehistory upon Indian material, almost before that material had itself received attention.

If our treatment of the Marshall period appears less sympathetic than that of the earlier, it is because we are dealing now with a large professional machine, and we have selected for critical study its most vulnerable parts. The systematic collection and publication of all sorts of material in *Epigraphia Indica*, the *Annual Reports*, etc., the systematic conservation of monuments and preservation of antiquities in museums all advanced at a quite unprecedented rate. The claim has been made that sometimes the work of conservation, for example, lacked imagination, and that quality was sacrificed for quantity. We cannot examine it here, but the massive results of the Marshall period stand as their own testimony. It is an easy matter to criticize the excavations of the Department during this period, but it must be remembered that they were in no way inferior to a great part of the excavations carried out elsewhere at the time. Thus Taxila may be favourably compared with Silchester or many another site in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

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[31] *Ind. Ant.*, xxxv (1906), pp. 185–195; xxxiv (1905), pp. 229–44; xxxvi (1907), pp. 53–55.

[32] *N.I.S.*, xx (Allahabad, 1901).

The Period of Wheeler and Independence

The appointment of Sir Mortimer Wheeler as Director-General of Archaeology in 1944 opened a new period, and we shall conclude our survey of the history of archaeology in India by considering what new developments arose during his short term of direction. It is beyond our scope to examine Wheeler's background; we must be contented to notice that he combined in himself the main streams of archaeological thought of both Petrie and Pitt-Rivers, and that he was clearly influenced by Haverfield and Collingwood. He was not complimentary to past Indian workers. He writes: 'There have been archaeologists . . . in this country, but no coherent *science* of archaeology has ever been established here.'[33] His ideal he expressed in these words:

> 'The modern archaeologist . . . must be as much a diplomat as a scientist. He must be a scholar, he must be an organizer amongst busy men, he must be a leader.'

He early recognized the limitations of that 'overburdened monopolist' the Archaeological Department and looked to a 'widespread extension of archaeological research, from the confines of a Government department into the liberal activities of the universities and learned societies of India'.

The chief means to a reorganization of research were an insistence upon careful planning and a reorganization of the excavations branch. He also set about training the necessary staff for the new tasks. The outcome of his years may be seen, through his own eyes, in his summary of the planning and achievements of 1944–7.[34] The fruits of his work, however, have only ripened in the following years when, since Independence, the Department has continued to apply and develop the techniques of planning and research which Wheeler first employed in the Indian field. It is not, however, a matter of surprise that the Department has since, in some respects, shown how firmly rooted are the older traditions of Cunningham and Marshall. The progress of research in both prehistory and archaeology since Independence has been encouraging. Not the least happy sign has been the emergence of active departments of archaeology in a number of Indian universities and the pursuance of far wider research and more systematic schemes of survey, both in the Department and outside it, than at any time before.

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[33] 'Archaeological Planning for India: some of the factors', *Ancient India*, 2 (1946), pp. 125–33.

[34] 'Archaeological Fieldwork in India: Planning Ahead', *Ancient India*, 5 (1949), pp. 4–11.

Looking back over the events we have just recounted we are struck by the variety of the aspects of Indian prehistory and archaeology. Indeed, as Fergusson wrote, 'India is a cosmos in itself.' The study of Indian civilization in its historical aspect is so vast that few can hope to master every facet. Archaeology, as Childe has well said, is now 'the systematic search for, and comparison and classification of, the substantial remains of human handiwork'. The diversity of those remains was already apparent to Cunningham, and since his day the application of new, scientific, techniques has vastly increased their range. In these circumstances it is not surprising that Indian Archaeology, while sharing its methods and techniques with archaeology elsewhere, should have its own special problems and must therefore also develop its own ways of dealing with them. If the study is to progress it will call for a diversity of approach and specialist knowledge governed and controlled by many-sided scholarship and by common sense. Bearing in mind the admirable work of amateurs in this country one can only hope that the growth of interest within the universities will lead to a comparable growth of amateur archaeology in India. For with the Government Department, the university, and the learned society working side by side progress should be assured.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.R.A.S.I. = *Annual Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India.*
A.S.R. = *Archaeological Survey of India. Reports.*
N.I.S. = *Archaeological Survey of India. New Imperial Series.*
Am. Anth. = *American Anthropologist.*
Ind. Ant. = *Indian Antiquary.*
J.A.S.B. = *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*

20. MODERN HISTORIANS OF ANCIENT INDIA[1]

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Introduction

In this paper I attempt to trace changing attitudes towards ancient Indian history and developing techniques of research on it. It has been impossible, in the time and space at my disposal, to deal with every significant historian or his work, and hence I have confined myself to a few of the most important, and to their most valuable general works on the subject—three Europeans of different periods and nations—Christian Lassen, Vincent Smith, and Louis de la Vallée Poussin—and three Indians—Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, Professor H. C. Raychaudhuri, and the collective authors of the *History and Culture of the Indian People.*

Certain other historians and their works are mentioned in passing, but this paper is not intended as an exhaustive survey of the whole field. It has been my chief purpose to examine the historical outlooks of the authors concerned. In this I have been much hampered by the absence of adequate biographies. The conventional obituary notices in learned journals are of very little use for my purpose. Their inadequacy has been brought home to me with special force in the case of Vincent Smith, whose strangely ambivalent attitude to his subject will be discussed in due course.

I should add that I am here chiefly concerned with workers in the field of political history. To cover the whole field would mean taking into account almost every branch of indological study.

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[1] Abbreviations used in this paper: *B.C.W.*, Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, 4 vols. (Poona, 1927–33). *D.H.I.*, L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Dynasties et Histoire de l'Inde depuis Kanishka jusqu'aux invasions musulmanes. Histoire du Monde, Tome VI*^{2} (Paris, 1935). *E.H.I.*, V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, third edition (Oxford, 1914). (The alterations in the fourth edition (Oxford, 1924) were made after Smith's death by S. M. Edwardes.) *H.C.I.P.*, ed. R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalkar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*; vol. i, *The Vedic Age* (London, 1951); vol. ii, *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bombay, 1951); vol. iii, *The Classical Age* (Bombay, 1954); vol. iv, *The Age of Imperial Kanauj* (Bombay, 1955). *I.A.*, Christian Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, 4 vols. (Bonn); vol. i, second edition, 1867; vol. ii, second edition, 1873; vol. iii, first edition, 1858; vol. iv, first edition, 1861. *I.E.*, L. de la Vallée Poussin, *Indo-Européens et Indo-Iraniens. L'Inde jusque vers 300 av. J.C., Histoire du Monde, Tome III*, second edition (Paris, 1936). *I.T.M.*, L. de Vallée Poussin, *L'Inde aux Temps des Mauryas et des Barbares, Grecs, Scythes, Parthes et Yue-tchi. Histoire du Monde, Tome VI*^{1} (Paris, 1930). *O.H.I.*, V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, first edition (Oxford, 1919). (The alterations in the second edition (1923) were made after Smith's death by S. M. Edwardes.) *P.H.A.I.*, H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, fifth edition (Calcutta, 1950). The sixth edition (1953) contains few alterations.

PART I. WESTERN HISTORIANS

Christian Lassen (1800–76)

Christian Lassen was a Norwegian, who spent most of his working life as Professor of Indian Languages and Literature at the University of Bonn.[2] He studied Sanskrit under A. W. von Schlegel, one of the first German Sanskritists, and, though he appears never to have visited India, his attention early turned to its history. He was one of the few European scholars who took a keen interest in the pioneering historical work of Prinsep, Masson, and the other early students of coins and inscriptions of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, to which he dedicated his *magnum opus*. As well as his important work on Prākrit and Pāli, in which he collaborated with the French Sanskritist Eugène Burnouf, he made an independent attempt at deciphering the Brāhmī script, in which he was anticipated by Prinsep, and produced one of the earliest scientific historical monographs on an ancient Indian subject: *Zur Geschichte der Griechischen und Indo-skythischen Könige in Baktrien, Kabul, und Indien, durch Entzifferung der altkabulisch Legenden auf ihre Münzen* (Bonn, 1838).[3] His friend and colleague Burnouf characterized him as a man 'of marvellous learning and great simplicity'[4] and this verdict may perhaps be applied to his monumental history of ancient India, *Indische Alterthumskunde*. Smith claimed that his *Early History of India* was the 'first attempt to present . . . a narrative of the leading events in Indian (*scil.* ancient Indian) political history' (*E.H.I.*, 2); again, in the introduction to the *Oxford History of India*, he wrote: 'no general history of the Hindu Period was in existence before the publication in 1904 of the first edition of my Early History of India' (*O.H.I.*, xxi). Unless by 'general' Smith meant 'for the general reader', he was surprisingly forgetful of the gigantic work which Lassen completed over forty years before the publication of the *Early History*, and beside which the *Early History* appears almost trivial in its narrow scope and lack of detail.

Indische Alterthumskunde consists of four volumes, published between 1847 and 1861, of which the first two reappeared in second editions in 1867 and 1873 respectively; each volume is of over a thousand large pages. The work has been described as 'One of the world's greatest monuments of untiring industry and critical scholarship.'[5] It commences with an exhaustive study of Indian geography (*I.A.* i, 1–416) and a lengthy section on Indian ethnology, as it was understood at the time (ibid., 421–567). The rest of the four volumes is devoted to history, including that of Ceylon and South-East Asia. Lassen considers the history of India down to the Muslim conquest, continuing his narrative of South Indian history to the fall of Vijayanagara. Though here, as in all the works which we shall consider, the emphasis is on political history, in each book long chapters are devoted to the history of religion, social life, literature, language, science, industry and commerce; the attention which Lassen gives to the two latter topics is perhaps surprising for his period.[6] In keeping with his own training and the interests of his readers, the work considers the classical world's knowledge of India and the mutual influence of the two cultures in very great detail.

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[2] Apparently he looked on himself as German. The very brief article in Aschehoug's *Konversasjons Leksikon*, the Norwegian Encyclopaedia, concludes rather bitterly to the effect that he forgot his native land and left his library to the University of Bonn.

[3] Translations of German and French passages will be found in the footnotes. Index numerals refer to these.

[4] Quoted in E. Windisch, *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie* (Strassburg-Berlin, 1917–20), p. 155. This work devotes two chapters to Lassen and his *Indische Alterthumskunde*.

So much new historical material has come to light and so many lacunae in the story of India's past have been filled since Lassen's day that his work is now practically useless. His chronology has since been proved almost completely false; thus he believed that the Kadphises kings ruled *c.* 85 B.C., that Rudradāman ruled in the first half of the first century B.C., and that the Imperial Gupta dynasty came to an end in the year when in fact its era began, A.D. 319. We must recognize, however, that, despite its archaic character, *Indische Alterthumskunde* represents a tremendous achievement on the part of its author, and is a milestone in the progress of the science of Indology. In it Lassen distills the quintessence of all the contemporary knowledge of the subject, adding much of his own. No other single hand has since produced so monumental a survey of the history of early India.

In some respects Lassen's approach to his sources compares well with that of many of his successors. His first volume, dealing with the earliest history of India, was written when little was known of Vedic literature, and thus we may perhaps excuse him for hardly mentioning it, and for relying almost entirely on Purāṇic and Epic tradition. This shortcoming is not satisfactorily remedied, however, in the second edition, which appeared when much more about the earliest literature of India was known, exactly twenty years after the first; but by this time the author's sight was failing, and he admits himself that in some respects he has been unable to keep up with the times. His attitude to source-material of the type of the Purāṇas is by no means credulous or uncritical. He finds fault with Tod and Mill for putting too much faith in legend and tradition. He is well aware of the inadequacy of the Rājput chronicles, stating that they are unreliable even for the latest reigns recorded, and for more ancient history practically useless (*I.A.* iii, 1151). He has a somewhat higher opinion of the Purāṇas and Epics, and believes the latter to be comparatively reliable, though he has some doubts about the Purāṇic king-lists—'die Purāṇa führen ihre Dynastien in ein viel zu hohes Alterthum zurück'[7] (*I.A.* i, 580). Though he considers the story of the *Mahābhārata* in great detail, and has much more faith in its historicity than have most modern authorities, he has clear ideas of its difficulties as a historical source (*I.A.* i, 582 ff.). He takes the stories of Vikramāditya quite seriously (*I.A.* ii, 759), and, on the basis of late tradition, believes that the Śaka Era was founded by a king Śālivāhana (*I.A.* ii, 870). He retails various legends about Bhoja (*I.A.* iii, 844). Details of the plot of Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa* are accepted as historical without adequate criticism: 'Da in dieser Erzählung Könige mit ihren Eigennamen auftreten, darf geglaubt werden, dass sie auf wahrer Überlieferung beruhen'[8] (*I.A.* ii, 216). He forgets that in a drama all the important characters have to be given names, whether true or fictitious.

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[5] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, eleventh edition, s.v. Lassen.

[6] The chapter of *Indische Alterthumskunde* on the trade and commerce of India in the early centuries of the Christian Era has been translated by K. P. Jayaswal and A. Banerji-Sastri (*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, x, 1924, pp. 227–316). This is the only translation of Lassen known to me, though others may exist.

On the other hand Lassen's attitude to legend and tradition is not always credulous. Thus, though he tells the whole story of Vijaya's conquest of Ceylon, he rejects the historicity of its hero: 'Da *Vijaya Sieg*, *Eroberung* bedeutet, braucht es kaum besonders hervorgehoben zu werden, dass mit seinem Namen keine wirkliche Person, sondern ein Ereigniss bezeichnet wird, die Eroberung Lankā's'[9] (*I.A.* ii, 104).[10]

He fully recognizes the superiority of inscriptions as historical sources over all other Indian source-material, and compares a Rājput tradition as recorded by Tod with a Guhilla inscription, to the disadvantage of the former (*I.A.* ii, 33 ff.). Though many of the most important historical inscriptions were unpublished at the time of writing, Lassen fully utilizes those at his disposal. And he recognizes the precariousness of many of the conclusions arrived at from other sources: 'Der Mangel an historischen Schriften führt den Übelstand mit sich dass Schriften zu Rathe gezogen werden müssen, welchen dieser Character völlig abgeht'[11] (*I.A.* ii, 798).

Lassen is not devoid of sympathy for his subject. Linguistic studies, to which he devoted much of his life, should have as their ultimate purpose 'die genaue Bekanntschaft mit dem ganzen Kulturzustande der Inder hinzukommen'[12] (*I.A.* i, vi). He defines the subject of his four great volumes as 'die geschichtliche Entwickelung eines der grössten, am frühesten civilisirten und eigenthümlichsten Völker der alten Welt'[13] (Preface to first edition, *I.A.* i, v). Though I can find in his work no trace of the Pan-Aryanism and Pan-Germanism which vitiated much later German historical scholarship, Lassen has strong pro-Āryan prejudices, defining the Āryans as 'ein Cultur verbreitendes Volk . . . wie kein anderes der morgenländischen Welt'[14] (*I.A.* i, 567). Though many aspects of its doctrines were at the time imperfectly understood, he has great respect for Buddhism, the advent of which he believes to have marked a turning point in the history of India. Buddhism, he declares, has, after Christianity, the highest title to be called a world religion, for, unlike Islām, it is not spread by force, and is not destructive, but builds on and adapts the cultures of the lands to which it is taken (*I.A.* i, 755). The religion of Islām, on the other hand, rouses him to invective. It is based solely on the utterances of Muhammad, and thus the range of its intellectual thought is limited. The great Arab philosophers, by the very act of philosophizing, virtually foreswore their faith. Islām is totally unprogressive. Muslims, being unable to admit any truth in faiths other than their own, must inevitably despise and seek to destroy the religions of the peoples whom they conquer. Islām (and here a trace of Lassen's Hegelian preconceptions may be detected) is a 'negative Prinzip',[15] obliterating other culture. Its only legacy to the world is in its preservation of Greek and Indian astronomy and mathematics from destruction, and in its doctrine of aniconic monotheism, which has prepared many backward peoples, especially in Africa, for ultimate acceptance of Christianity, 'der einzige Weltreligion'[16] (*I.A.* iii, 1158.) Hinduism, for all its faults, was a rock on which the fury (*Wuth*) of Islām broke (ibid., i, 415). Indeed neither Greek culture nor the destructive power of Islām could conquer Hindu culture. Only to 'dem universellen Geiste des Christenthums'[17] must it ultimately give way (*I.A.* ii, 164). Though not explicitly stated, Lassen is clearly thinking in Hegelian terms —Hinduism is the thesis, Islām the antithesis, and Christianity the synthesis.

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[7] The Purāṇas carry back their dynasties to an antiquity far too remote.

[8] As kings appear in this tale under their proper names it is legitimate to believe that they are baseb on reliable tradition.

[9] Since *Vijaya* means *victory*, *conquest*, it need not be specially brought to the attention that this name does not refer to any real person, but to an event, the conquest of Laṅkā.

[10] In the quotations I transliterate Indian words according to the standard system in place of the unconventional system used by Lassen and the French system (employing italics for the retroflex consonants) used by de la Vallée Poussin.

[11] The lack of historical texts brings with it the unfortunate situation that documents must be used as evidence which are completely devoid of historical character.

He displays a laudable attempt, which some later historians have not imitated, at portraying Indian history in the framework of world history. Much space is devoted to India's cultural and political relations with the classical world, South East Asia, and China. But despite his classical training Lassen is not dazzled by the triumphs of Alexander, as was Vincent

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[12] To gain an intimate acquaintance with the whole cultural condition of the Indians.

[13] The historical development of one of the greatest, earliest civilized, and most individual peoples of the ancient world.

[14] A culture-spreading people, such as no other of the oriental world.

[15] Negative principle.

[16] The sole world-religion.

[17] To the universal spirit of Christianity.

Smith. His treatment of the subject is little longer than Smith's, though *Indische Alterthumskunde* must be at least ten times as long as the *Early History of India*, and he writes of Alexander and the régime of Candragupta with almost complete freedom from the value judgements and comparisons unfavourable to India which have aroused so much criticism of Smith's treatment of the same themes (*I.A.* ii, 127 ff.).

Though, in the four thousand pages of his great work, he refers to Hegel explicitly only twice, it is evident that he is a Hegelian. Of these two references the first is to a statement in Hegel's *Philosophie der Geschichte*, to the effect that only in a state governed by the rule of law can there be a clear consciousness of the events of the past (*I.A.* ii, 1); the other mentions Hegel's three types of history (*die ursprüngliche, die reflektirende, die philosophische*)[18] (*I.A.* ii, 2 fn.). But unacknowledged Hegelian ideas are fairly numerous. Thus the Persians were the greatest rulers of the ancient East because they furthered the dialectic of customs and ideas: 'Die Perser zeichneten sich auch vor den ältern herrschenden Asiatischen Völkern durch eine grössere Freiheit des Geistes insofern aus, dass sie bereit waren, die Gebräuche fremder Völker anzunehmen'[19] (*I.A.* ii, 124).

Again, Alexander served the world by accelerating the dialectic process of history: 'Das Streben der Weltgeschichte die einzelen Volkseigenthumlichkeiten in stets grösserm Umfange zu Überwinden und durch Ineinanderbildung und Verschmelzung dem höchsten Ziel, der Vereinigung aller zu einer einzigen Menschheit, stets näher zu führen, hat sich zuerst in der von Alexander dem Grossen gegründeten Periode der alten Geschichte verwirklicht'[20] (*I.A.* ii, 125).

With his Hegelian presuppositions, Lassen cannot but approve of British rule in India, which he seems to look on as the synthesis[21] of the ancient kingdoms of Hindu India, the thesis, and of the predatory and oppressive dominance of the Muslims, the antithesis. In the world of religion and thought Christianity, as we have seen, unites and transmutes all that is of value in Hinduism and Islām. Similarly British rule, in contrast to that of Islām, allows the free development of the old Hindu culture. The British Raj is one 'in dem langdauernder Friede im Innern, Ruhe und Sicherheit des Eigenthums, Duldung des altväterlichen Glaubens, eine geregelte Verwaltung and Befolgung des überlieferten Gesetzes an der Stelle der stets wechselnden Herrschaft, des unaufhörlichen Krieges, der rücksichtlosen Erpressung, der fanatischen Glaubensverfolgung, der despotichsen Willkür und der Verachtung des einheimischen Gesetzes getreten sind'.[22] (*I.A.* i, 416.)

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[18] The primitive, the reflective, the philosophical.

[19] The Persians distinguished themselves from the older dominant Asian peoples by a greater freedom of the spirit, in that they were ready to adopt the customs of foreign peoples.

[20] The urge of world-history to encircle the individual national units in an ever wider compass, and through fashioning them and fusing them together to bring ever nearer the highest goal, the union of them all in a single humanity, first became active in the period of ancient history founded by Alexander the Great.

[21] I need hardly mention that I here employ this word in the Hegelian sense.

But Lassen is not so carried away by his Hegelianism as to ignore the other side of the medal. In linking India closer with the West, Britain, despite the benefits that her rule has conferred on India, has also impoverished her. Lassen's judgement in this particular, especially when we consider his time, place, and background, is remarkably acute. One would like to know something of his political affiliations, and whether he had any knowledge of the development which Hegelianism was receiving at the hands of two *émigré* Germans in England at the time of his writing *Indische Alterthumskunde*. The following passage might almost have been taken from *Das Kapital*: 'Wir sehen, dass die Englische Industrie die alten Indischen Manufacturen vernichtet, das Land in Verarmung gestürzt und für die Beherrscher die Nothwendigkeit herbeigeführt hat, Indien in ein grosses ackerbauendes, durch seinen Reichthum an Naturerzeugnissen einträglisches Land zu verwandeln'[23] (*I.A.* i, 417).

Vincent Smith (1848–1920)

Vincent Smith was born in Dublin, the son of a prominent doctor who was a well-known amateur numismatist and archaeologist. He entered the Indian Civil Service in 1869, and served in what is now Uttar Pradesh, rising to the rank of Commissioner. During his service in India he developed the antiquarian interests which he had acquired from his father, and had already published two monographs and numerous valuable papers on numismatics, archaeology and history when he retired in 1900. He had long planned a consecutive history of the whole Hindu period and he commenced work on this forthwith, producing the first edition of his famous *Early History of India* in 1904. The work was very successful, and a second edition appeared in 1908, with a third in 1914. The fourth edition was published after Smith's death, in 1924, having been revised by S. M. Edwardes. In the twenty years of his retirement from the I.C.S. Smith also produced his *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (1911), the *Oxford History of India* (1919), and several lesser works.

In the years between the last volume of *Indische Alterthumskunde* and the first edition of the *Early History* much new source-material had come to light, and the chronology of the period was on a firmer footing. Where

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[22] In which long-lasting internal peace, security of property, tolerance of the ancestral faith, a regulated administration, and adherence to transmitted law have taken the place of continually changing rulership, unintermittent war, irresponsible extortion, fanatical religious persecution, arbitrary despotism, and contempt for the indigenous law.

[23] We see that English industry has destroyed the old Indian handicrafts, plunged the land into poverty, and brought with it the necessity for its rulers to convert India into an immense agricultural country, profitable on account of its riches in natural products.

Lassen's chronology is out often by centuries, that of Smith would be broadly accepted by most modern authorities, though of course it contains many errors of detail. He had a much wider range of source-material than had Lassen—many inscriptions, which had been edited by numerous patient epigraphists, both European and Indian, fresh numismatic material, and the evidence of the Pāli scriptures, which in Lassen's time were imperfectly known. Smith records with legitimate satisfaction the 'immense progress' which had been made in the unravelling of the history of Hindu India (*E.H.I*, 2).

In the *Oxford History* he gives some idea of his purpose in writing history:

> 'The value and interest of history depend largely on the degree in which the present is illuminated by the past. . . . A new book on Indian history must be composed in a new spirit, as it is addressed to a new audience. Certain it is that the history of India does not begin with the battle of Plassey, as some people think it ought to begin, and that a sound knowledge of the older history will always be a valuable aid in the attempt to solve the numerous problems of modern India.' (*O.H.I.*, xxiii–iv.)

Smith's pragmatic conception of history as a means of using the past to understand the present and plan for the future was put into practice in one of his last published works, *Indian Constitutional Reform viewed in the Light of History* (1919), a criticism of the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals, based largely on his historical knowledge. Professor Vesey-Fitzgerald, a friend of Smith's and himself by no means ill disposed towards direct British rule in India, wrote of this that 'he had been too long absent from India, and his taste for antiquarian illustrations was too great, for his criticism to carry much weight, especially as his constructive proposals were few and small . . .'[24]

In the passage quoted above Smith seems to imply that he has the Indian reader in mind. In the *Early History*, on the other hand, in the course of his comments on Alexander, he admits implicitly that he is writing chiefly for the European reader, and this is made explicit in the concluding paragraph of the book. Yet the great success of both the *Early History* and the *Oxford History* must have been largely due to their adoption as standard text-books in Indian schools and colleges, and Smith can never have been wholly unaware of his potential Indian readers.

His *Early History* is 'primarily a political history' (*E.H.I.*, v), though 'the most important branch of Indian history is the history of her thought' *E.H.I.*, 478). Rightly Smith realizes that the key to many problems of religion, literature, and art is 'to be found in the accurate presentation of dynastic facts' (*E.H.I.*, 2, cf. ibid., 478). He recognizes, however, that ancient Indian political history has importance and significance in its own right (*E.H.I.*, 2–3).

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[24] *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. Smith, Vincent Arthur.

His explicit aim is 'to present the story of ancient India in the form of a connected narrative . . .; to relate facts . . . with impartiality; and to discuss the problems of history in a judicial spirit' (*E.H.I.*, 3). Yet he admits that some degree of subjectivity is inevitable:

> 'Nor is it possible for the writer of history, however great may be his respect for objective fact, to eliminate altogether his own personality. Every kind of evidence, even the most direct, must reach the reader, when presented in narrative form, as a reflection from the mirror of the writer's mind, with the liability to unconscious distortion. In the following pages the author has endeavoured to exclude the subjective element as far as possible.' (*E.H.I.*, 4.)

That Smith's attempt at objectivity was such a lamentable failure, and that he himself was apparently unaware of the fact, throw much light on the character of the man himself.

In his treatment of his sources Smith tends towards credulity. In the exegesis of the Bible and in the study of European tradition the technique of critical analysis had made considerable progress by his day, but Smith's attitude to legendary history differs little from that of Lassen. He claims to reject 'legend as distinguished from tradition' (without clearly defining the distinction), and omits 'many picturesque anecdotes'. Yet he condemns the European authorities who unduly disparage the Purāṇas, and finds in the latter 'much genuine and valuable historical tradition' (*E.H.I.*, 12). In the *Oxford History* he apparently swallows Pargiter's reconstruction of the Purāṇic data hook, line, and sinker (*O.H.I.*, 34). Sources contemporary with the events they describe are nearly always accepted without question. Thus Megasthenes' 'vivid account of Chandragupta's civil and military administration may be accepted without hesitation as true and accurate' (*E.H.I.*, 121). Harsa's 60,000 war elephants are accepted on the authority of Hsüan Tsang without criticism (*E.H.I.*, 339). Similarly Smith believes Hemacandra's statements about Kumārapāla's fanatical enforcement of *ahiṃsā* (*E.H.I.*, 181).

Yet he shows surprising mistrust of certain traditions, notably those preserved in Pāli in Ceylon. For instance, he rejects Geiger's interpretation of the evidence relating to the kings of Magadha around the time of the Buddha, and in the centuries following his death, in favour of the Purāṇic tradition, which, as it was preserved in Magadha, 'should be more trustworthy than those (traditions) recorded at a later date by monks in distant Ceylon' (*E.H.I.*, 47, cf. ibid., 11, 35, 186–7). In the *Early History* he accepts the Buddhist story of Ajātaśatru's parricide. In the *Oxford History* he is 'now disposed to reject it as being the outcome of *odium theologicum*, or sectarian rancour, which has done so much to falsify the history of Ancient India' (*O.H.I.*, 47–48). He was apparently unaware that the Jaina *Nirayāvalika Sūtra* confirmed the tradition. Possibly his strange antipathy to the 'monkish' traditions of the Buddhists was unconsciously encouraged by his background as a protestant in a Catholic land.

Smith is fully conscious of the fundamental unity of India: 'The political unity of all India, although never attained perfectly in fact, always was the ideal of the people throughout the centuries. . . . The immemorial persistence of that ideal goes a long way to explain the acquiescence of India in British rule, and was at the bottom of the passionate outburst of loyal devotion to the King-Emperor so touchingly expressed in many ways by princes and people in 1911.' (*O.H.I.*, ix–x.) Smith realistically employs the phrase 'acquiescence in' rather than 'support for' in this passage, which, with others considered below, is of importance in demonstrating his attitude to India and his subject.

He believes, however, that the complete political unity of India is only 'a thing of yesterday', and he is conscious of striking differences between the culture of the North and that of the Peninsula. The latter he touches on but lightly, since its details 'are mainly of local interest'. This statement is not wholly true, and may conceal the fact that they were not of interest to the author, who, as far as I know, had no knowledge of Dravidian languages.

Smith's attitude towards ancient India was by no means always unsympathetic or derogatory. He rejects a view quite common in his day that all that was good in early India was due to the influence of Hellenistic ideas (*E.H.I.*, 237), and concludes that in fact Western influence on ancient India was very small (ibid., 241). Unlike Sir W. W. Tarn, Smith describes Seleucus' treaty with Candragupta as 'a humiliating peace' (*E.H.I.*, 119), and he rejects the view that Alexander's 'splendid but transitory raid' had any influence on the foundation of the Mauryan empire (ibid., 145). He especially admires the India of the Guptas. Thus, referring to Fa-hsien's description of the free hospital at Pāṭaliputra, he writes: 'It may be doubted if any equally efficient foundation was to be seen elsewhere in the world at that date; and its existence, anticipating the deeds of modern Christian charity, speaks well both for the character of the citizens who endowed it and for the genius of the great Asoka, whose teaching still bore such wholesome fruit many centuries after his decease.' (*E.H.I.*, 296.) India had probably never been governed better, 'after the Oriental manner', than under Candra Gupta II (ibid., 298), and the Gupta Period was 'a time not unworthy of comparison with the Elizabethan and Stuart period in England' (ibid., 304). For so patriotic and romantic a historian as Smith the latter remark is high praise indeed.

Above all things Smith is a hero-worshipper, and several great Indian rulers met with his approval. But his greatest hero is Alexander, of whom 'criticism is silenced in admiration' (*E.H.I.*, 111). Of the 478 pages of the third edition of the *Early History* no less than sixty-six are devoted to Alexander's campaign in India. His heroes in general are the strong and successful—Candragupta Maurya, 'a man of blood and iron', Aśoka, 'a masterful autocrat ruling church and state alike with a strong hand', and Samudra Gupta, the 'Indian Napoleon', who was 'endowed with no ordinary powers' and whose southern campaign is characterized as 'wonderful' (*E.H.I.*, 284 ff.).

He tends, in fact, to exaggerate the ruthlessness and sternness of the ancient Indian king. Thus the much-admired Samudra Gupta 'made no scruple about setting his own ruthless boasts of sanguinary wars by the side of the quietist moralizings of him who deemed "the chiefest conquest" to be the conquest of piety' (*E.H.I.*, 282). In fact, the Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta strikes one by its humane urbanity, when compared with many similar panegyrics of the other ancient civilizations. The *Arthaśāstra* is criticized for its autocratic and machiavellian character, and its penal code, in fact much milder than those of many other ancient civilizations, is stigmatized as 'ferociously severe' (ibid., 143). In the *Oxford History* the system of the *Arthaśāstra* is twice compared with that of imperial Germany, with which Britain was at war at the time of writing (*O.H.I.*, 68, 77).

For all the fascination which the unlimited exercise of power seems to have had for Smith, he generally uses the terms 'autocracy' and 'despotism', which he employs synonymously (*O.H.I.*, xii), in a derogatory sense. Despotism does not admit of development, and therefore, presumably, India has not progressed (*O.H.I.*, xi). In one place despotism is qualified by the epithet 'Oriental', which seems to imply a special brand of despotism, less efficient, if not more oppressive, than the despotism of the West (*E.H.I.*, 293). Smith rightly rejects the view of Jayaswal 'that the ancient Indian king was a "limited" or constitutional monarch' (*O.H.I.*, xii), but virtually ignores the existence of a delicate, organically produced system of checks and balances, in the form of the caste system, the brāhmaṇs, tradition, and public opinion, which usually effectively prevented the worst manifestations of autocracy in ancient India.

While he admires the art of India he has little good to say about her literature. The Rājput epics are 'rude' (by which he presumably means 'crude'), and Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*, in my opinion one of the great masterpieces of Indian literature, is typified as an 'amazingly clever, though irritating, performance; executed in the worst possible taste, and yet containing passages of admirable and vivid description' (*E.H.I.*, 343). Smith is incapable of realizing that canons of taste differ in cultures other than his own, and that a work can only be fairly judged according to the canons employed by its author.

His attitude to the Hindu social system, as to the ancient Indian political system, is ambivalent. Caste 'fosters intense class pride, fatal to a feeling of brotherhood between man and man' (*O.H.I.*, 40). But it has served a useful purpose, in preserving Hindu culture, and it 'will last for untold centuries because it still suits India on the whole, in spite of its many inconveniences. . . . The deep waters of Hinduism are not easily stirred. Ripples on the surface leave the depths unmoved' (ibid., 42). The logic of this is clear. Since caste makes human brotherhood impossible, and since it will continue for untold centuries, India, if left to her own devices, will revert either to 'Oriental despotism' or to anarchy.

Though he cannot deny that the 'Oriental despot' often had some care for the people whom he ruled, he is quick to draw a moral in favour of the superior benevolence of the British Rāj. Thus, after quoting Kalhaṇa's description of the great famine of 917–18, he writes: 'This gruesome picture may give cause for reflection to some critics of modern methods of famine relief' (*E.H.I.*, 374). The *locus classicus* of Smith's reading of the lessons of India's history is in his description of the condition of Northern India after the death of Harṣa. His picture seems to me to be broadly justified by the evidence, though some Indian historians would disagree. The period from 647 to the Muslim invasion saw a definite deterioration in both political and social conditions north of the Narmadā, and war became endemic. But Smith's conclusions from this fact are less easily justified:

> 'Harsha's death loosened the bonds which restrained the disruptive forces always ready to operate in India, and allowed them to produce their natural result, a medley of petty states, with ever-varying boundaries, and engaged in unceasing internecine war. Such was India when first disclosed to European observation in the fourth century B.C., and such it always has been, except during the comparatively brief periods in which a vigorous central government has compelled the mutually repellent molecules of the body politic to check their gyrations and submit to the grasp of a superior controlling force. . . .
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> 'The three following chapters, which attempt to give an outline of the salient features in the bewildering annals of Indian petty states when left to their own devices for several centuries, may perhaps serve to give the reader a notion of what India always has been when released from the control of a supreme authority, and what she would be again, if the hand of the benevolent despotism which now holds her in its iron grasp should be withdrawn.' (*E.H.I.*, 356–8.)

In a similar passage in the later *Oxford History* (p. 182), Smith tells us that 'even now, in the twentieth century, she would relapse quickly into that condition, if the firm although mild control exercised by the paramount power should be withdrawn'.

India, for Smith, is very fascinating, but also very strange and frightening. 'Hindu India, the land of the Brahmans, which is the real India' is:

> 'a land the fascination of which is largely due to the unique character of its civilization. That quality of strangeness makes the history of Hindu India less attractive to the European or American general reader than the more easily intelligible story of the Muslim or British conquerors, but anybody who desires to understand modern India must be content to spend some labour on the study of ancient India during the long ages of autonomy.' (*E.H.I.*, 477.)

Such a reader may find the history of ancient India 'at times even repellent' (ibid., 478). Yet Smith was himself content to devote much of his life to that repellent study—and I cannot believe that he did so only to help his fellow civilians better to understand the millions whom they governed, or to provide the British Rāj with ammunition with which to defend itself against the attacks of nationalist leaders who called on their followers to revive the glories of the past.

It seems that Smith, despite his thirty years' service in the I.C.S., never really came to terms with the land or its people. The imaginative and intellectual effort demanded in order to see the world through the eyes of a people not nurtured in a culture based on the Bible and the classics was too much for him, if he ever realized the necessity of such an effort. India was always mysterious and remote to him, in parts strangely beautiful, but aloof, utterly foreign, and hence to be feared. Very significant in this connection is a passage in the *Early History* in which he tries to think the thoughts of Candra Gupta II, in embarking on his campaign against the Western Satraps: 'The motives of an ambitious king in undertaking an aggressive war against a rich neighbour are not far to seek; but we may feel assured that differences of race, creed, and manners supplied the Gupta monarch with special reasons for desiring to suppress the impure foreign rulers of the west' (*E.H.I.*, 292).

I believe that it is superficial criticism to dismiss Smith's unfortunate *obiter dicta* as mere clumsy propaganda on the part of a retired civilian in favour of the maintenance of direct British rule. Such gratuitous insults to India's aspirations, which would probably have passed unnoticed in the time of Mill and Elphinstone, but which in Smith's day might have been deliberately calculated to arouse the antagonism of all his Indian readers, are evidence of a sensibility morbidly blunted in this respect; they are likewise evidence of deep-seated fear, and perhaps also of an unexpressed and almost unconscious sense of guilt. The strange fascination which absolute power seems to have held for Vincent Smith, and his self-righteous but no doubt sincere horror of cruelty and oppression, especially when exercised by Indian rulers, point in the same direction. To understand

Smith's attitude to the history of India it is necessary to understand Smith, and this is impossible without lengthy research in Dublin, India, and London. Psychologists maintain that a man's whole outlook may be conditioned by the experiences of his earliest childhood, and none would deny that it is also largely shaped by the influences he encounters during his boyhood and youth. To confirm or deny the hypothesis I put forward in the following paragraph might require some months' research on Smith's background; I offer it as little more than a guess, but one which fits the few facts about Vincent Smith that are known to me, and which may provoke discussion.

Smith, from the whole content of his writings, was evidently an anglophile; he was a member of a landed Anglo-Irish family, whose ancestors had settled in Ireland at the time of Cromwell.[25] His social background was apparently the wealthy pro-English Protestant Dublin middle class, few members of which were interested in the growing Irish nationalism of the times. He was born during the Potato Famine, and his youth was spent in an atmosphere of unrest, of Fenianism, rent-strikes, and home-rule agitation, for which probably neither he nor his family had any sympathy. No doubt conditions in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century were productive of the same psychology of fear and guilt in some of the ruling class as were conditions in India in the early twentieth century. Moreover, Catholic Ireland had a culture of its own, a culture older and more solidly rooted in ancient tradition than the culture of England, which, fundamentally, was that of Vincent Smith. Even in his boyhood he may have felt a stranger in his native land, surrounded by a civilization which was not his own, and by folk who were alien to him, and who, it seemed, were already threatening to rise and overwhelm him and his social group. A few unfortunate childhood experiences in such conditions, if not counteracted by intelligent parents, would be sufficient to instil a half-conscious xenophobia which not even a profound acquaintance with a different culture could eradicate. In my opinion some such hypothesis as this is the only satisfactory explanation of Smith's curious approach to the subject of his study, and of his egregious insensitiveness to the feelings of his Indian readers. He transferred to India his attitude to his native Ireland.

It is well to remember that Smith had his critics, even among Englishmen. Perhaps the most interesting of these was E. B. Havell, a pioneer in the sympathetic study of Indian art, whose *History of Aryan Rule in India from the Earliest Times to the Death of Akbar* appeared in 1918. Havell rode a peculiar hobby-horse, which we may label Pan-Āryanism. For all that is good in India, especially for the rural democracy of the *panchāyats*, on which he lays much stress, and for the rule of law, the Āryans were responsible. Akbar was, so to speak, an honorary Āryan, because he had

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[25] G. N. Nuttall-Smith, *The Chronicles of a Puritan Family in Ireland* (Oxford, 1923), ch. II.

Rājput blood in his veins and encouraged the Āryan virtues of tolerance and freedom. There is an inherent affinity between Englishman and Indian, because both are Āryans; and England should encourage India's aspirations to self-government under the Crown, for they are in keeping with the Āryan tradition, which German imperialism has betrayed, but which British imperialism must foster. Here an imperialist spirit sturdier and healthier than that of Vincent Smith welcomes the future with confidence, though Havell produces a false theory of Indian history to justify his attitude.

We may laugh at Havell's fanciful picture of Indian history, but most of us will agree with his remarks on Smith's approach to early India:

> 'It must be peculiarly humiliating to them (*scil.* the Indians) to be constantly told by their rulers that in political science India has never at any period of her history attained to the highest level of Europe; that Freedom has never spread her wings over their native land; that they are heirs to untold centuries of "Oriental despotism" and must wait patiently until the highly cultivated political fruits of the West can be successfully grown in the virgin soil of India. . . . Whether unintentional or not, no greater spiritual injury can be done to a people than to teach them to despise the achievements of their forefathers. To overvalue them can hardly be a mistake.' (Op. cit., viii.)

Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1869–1938)

From the days of the first important French Sanskritist, Léonard de Chézy, the French school of indologists generally showed a deep sympathy with the cultural aspects of the subject, and two French authorities of the late nineteenth century, Émile Sénart and Sylvain Lévi, made very valuable contributions to our knowledge of ancient Indian history. The Belgian Louis de la Vallée Poussin studied with both these teachers. For most of his life he was Professor of the Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin at the University of Ghent, but his interest in Indology was roused by his linguistic studies, and his real work was chiefly in the field of Buddhist metaphysics and logic. A pious Roman Catholic, he is said by his friend Professor Masson-Oursel never to have had any real feeling for the religions of India, which won his curiosity, but not his sympathy, and to have approached Buddhism from the angle of the scholastic philosophy of medieval Europe.[26] It was as an authority on Buddhism that he was known among indologists until he wrote his three volumes in the well-known *Histoire du Monde* series. The first of the three, *Indo-Européens et Indo-Iraniens*, appeared in 1924 (second edition 1936), the second, *L'Inde aux Temps des Mauryas*, in 1930, and the third, *Dynasties et Histoire de l'Inde*, in

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[26] P. Masson-Oursel, Obituary notice, *Journal Asiatique* (1938), pp. 287–9.

1935. Together they form a complete political history of ancient India down to the coming of the Muslims, and of all the comprehensive studies of the subject hitherto produced in Europe they are the most up-to-date and scholarly, and the most useful to the present-day student.

In the foreword to his first volume de la Vallée Poussin disclaims the right to be called a historian. He is primarily a 'Buddhologist', 'sachant où est la science mais mal outillé pour écrire un aperçu de l'histoire de l'Inde'.[27] He adds:

> 'Je suis à la vérité trop absorbé par la Vibhāṣā et le Grand Véhicule pour essayer de mériter le titre d'historien! Mais une ambition plus modeste n'est pas coupable. . . . C'est mon excuse pour entreprendre une sorte de *memento*, très sec, mais, j'ose l'espérer, à peu près complet et suffisament exact.'[28] (*D.H.I.*, xvi.)

The student of history, on reading such a disclaimer, might expect very little from de la Vallée Poussin's three volumes, especially after his admission, in as many words, that he had never visited India (*I.E.*, 106). His first volume might confirm this impression in some respects. In this much space is devoted to the history of language, and to historical theories based on the data of comparative philology; the religious systems of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, and early Buddhism are dealt with in some detail; there are lengthy sections on ethnography and the origins of the system of caste and *varṇa*; the section entitled 'Faits historiques ou semi-historiques', on the other hand, takes up only forty-two pages out of a total of 399. In the two later volumes, covering periods of which our historical knowledge is more precise, political history receives the author's chief attention, but these volumes also contain valuable paragraphs on many aspects of religious and social history. It is evident that, for de la Vallée Poussin, appetite came with eating, and the very sound observations which he makes on the pattern of Indian history in the introduction to his third volume (*D.H.I.*, xi–xx), to which I refer later, show that, whether or not he was a historian when he commenced writing history, he certainly deserved the title by the time his work was completed.

Though the books contain many passages which are well worded and interestingly written, and though the author often shows a sense of humour, especially when he indulges in gentle irony at the expense of the theories of other authorities, his style is generally dry. His French is sometimes crabbed and rather difficult for the foreigner to follow, while many of his sections, especially those on dynastic history in the third volume, seem little more than king-lists, to which brief notes are appended. His work makes few concessions to the general reader. It contains very lengthy bibliographies. Conflicting theories are considered with great thoroughness, sometimes without the author clearly stating his own view, and doubt is cast on many widely accepted traditions; thus the well-known story of Viḍūḍabha's usurpation and of his massacre of the Śākyas is characterized as 'une légende curieuse où quelque lambeau d'histoire se dissimule'[29] (*I.E.*, 228).

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[27] Knowing where the knowledge is to be found, but badly equipped to write a survey of the history of India.

[28] I am in fact too wrapped up in the Vibhāṣā and the Greater Vehicle even to try to deserve the title of historian. But I am not to be blamed for a more modest ambition. This is my excuse for undertaking a sort of synopsis, very dry, but, I venture to hope, almost complete and sufficiently accurate.

In fact, de la Vallée Poussin's works are chiefly notable for their thoroughness and critical approach. More fully than either Lassen or Smith, or for that matter than most of the authors of the first volume of the *Cambridge History of India*, which appeared at about the same time as the first of de la Vallée Poussin's volumes, he is conscious of the tenuousness of much of our knowledge of ancient India, and of the provisional character even of widely accepted theories. Thus:

> 'L'indianiste, en ce qui concerne les periodes non éclairées par les inscriptions, se contente de "certitudes" qui, ailleurs, seraient a peine regardées comme des vraisemblances ou des possibilités. Les données qu'il utilise sont mal datées, peu explicites, parfois maigres jusqu'à la fragilité. . . . De grands savants ont etabli sur des bases plus que fragiles des echafaudages ou nous montons les yeux fermés.'[30] (*I.E.*, 108–9.)

Though he admits his debt to Smith, he is particularly caustic in his comments on the credulous treatment of the Purāṇic king-lists by Smith and 'le laborieux Pargiter'. In his attitude to these sources, which are still a bone of contention among Indian scholars, he ranges himself on the side of R. G. Bhandarkar and H. C. Raychaudhuri, and refers with great approbation to the work of these two authorities:

> 'Avouons-nous que nous ne comprenons pas, mais pas du tout, la méthode classique d'exégèse des Purāṇas, et le vain espoir de tirer le vrai du faux par d'arbitraires moyennes. Par exemple, le Vāyu accorde à un certain roi 24 ans de règne; le Matsya, au même roi, 36 ans. V. Smith inscrit gravement 32 ans comme "durée rectifiée", *duration adjusted*, de ce roi. De même il adjuste à 40 ans le règne d'un prince que le

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[29] A strange legend in which some shred of history lies hidden.

[30] The indologist, as far as periods not covered by inscriptions are concerned, is satisfied with 'certainties' which elsewhere would scarcely be accepted as probabilities or possibilities. The data he makes use of are badly dated, inexplicit, often thin to the point of feebleness. Great scholars have reared, on bases which are more than fragile, scaffoldings which we climb with our eyes closed.

Vāyu nomme sans adjouter chiffre et que le Matsya chiffre par 56. N'est ce pas enfantin?'[31] (*I.T.M.*, 213.)

Nevertheless de la Vallée Poussin is aware of the dangers of the other extreme, and also criticizes the pseudo-scientific 'minimiste' tendencies of some European scholars. He claims in this particular at least to support the Middle Way of the Buddha (*I.E.*, 108). He clearly understands the task which lies before the historian of ancient India:

> 'Si nous souhaitons arriver "à la vision même des choses", ou, plus modestement, si nous voulons nous faire de la marche de la civilisation indienne une image qui ne soit pas trop livresque, nous devons renoncer, du coeur et des lèvres, à l'argument *a silentio*. Il faut donc, derrière les textes anciens, deviner ce qui a dû se passer.'[32] (*I.E.*, 115.)

His works are practically devoid of value judgements. In the introduction to his first volume he declares his intention of writing 'sans parti pris et avec sincérité'[33] (*I.E.*, 107), and in general he succeeds in his intention. Thus the facts of Alexander's invasion are stated without comment or undue emphasis. In one passage he attacks those indologists who, from the tribunal of contemporary Europe, sit in judgement on the religion and social life of an ancient civilization which is not their own:

> 'Que faut il penser du Brâhmanisme et de la caste? On est honteux de l'avouer, les jugements des indianistes sont, trop souvent, commandés par des préjugés qui paraissent ridicules.'[34] (*I.E.*, 187 n. 2.)

De la Vallée Poussin rejects the widespread fallacy that Hindu India experienced no fundamental change throughout its history, and he recognizes that ancient India had other qualities than a propensity for profound mystical philosophy:

> 'La génie hindoue, que nous considérons souvent comme essentiellement mystique et fantaisiste, révéla, dans tous les domaines de la vie sociale,

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[31] We must admit that we do not understand, we do not understand at all, the classical method of Purāṇic exegesis, and the vain hope of extracting the true from the false by arbitrary methods. For example, the Vāyu gives a certain king a reign of 24 years; the Matsya gives the same king a reign of 36 years. V. Smith gives this king 32 years, solemnly writing 'duration adjusted'. In the same way he adjusts to 40 years the reign of a prince whom the Vāyu mentions without giving the length of his reign, and to whom the Matsya gives 56 years. Isn't this childish?

[32] If we hope to 'see things as they really were', or, more modestly, if we wish to create a picture of the march of Indian civilization which will not be too bookish, we must renounce, with our heart and our lips, the argument *a silentio*. Behind the ancient texts, we must divine what must have happened.

[33] Without prejudice and with sincerity.

[34] What should one think of brāhmaṇism and caste? We are ashamed to admit it, but the judgements of indologists are too often inspired by prejudices which seem quite ridiculous.

> politique, économique, d'incontestables dons d'organisation.'[35] (*I.T.M.*, 72.)

His general picture of ancient Indian life disagrees with those of most of his predecessors, whether Indian or European, but shows a wider and more comprehensive vision than do theirs, and, in my view, may be much nearer to the truth:

> 'Grâce aux dieux et à Sarasvatî, nous avons assez de preuves que l'Inde —malgré le sacrifice du cheval, les Upaniṣads, le Bouddhisme, la caste et les brâhmanes—fut a bien des égards un pays comme tous les autres, très vivant et progressif, épris des arts, des fêtes et des lettres, point morose, railleur, voltairien à l'occasion, facilement amusé et très amusant.'[36] (*I.E.*, 251.)

The rather turgid history of medieval Hindu India, which Smith dismissed as a mere chaos of warring petty states, has for de la Vallée Poussin a definite pattern:

> 'L'Inde des râjas, des rois des rois et des grands chefs féodaux, mérite l'attention. Elle n'est pas, ainsi qu'on le dit souvent, une masse chaotique périodiquement et vainement agitée par l'ambition des potentats et la turbulence des princes. Elle présente un intérêt proprement historique. Non seulement cette Inde révèle l'esprit guerrier des dynastes et des râjpoutes en même temps que la solidité d'organismes administratifs et commerciaux compliqués, mais encore elle est le théâtre du conflit d'un certain nombre d'états poursuivant des fins économiques et politiques précises.
>
> 'C'est, à mon avis, à tort qu'un indianiste, très judicieux d'ordinaire, écrit que "jusqu'au XI^{e} siècle . . . les guerres de l'Inde furent simplement des luttes entre des dynasties rivales . . . depourvues de toute signification". Je pense qu'on peut montrer que ces dynasties défendaient les intérêts permanents du pays où elles régnaient, des intérêts à proprement parler "nationaux".'[37] (*D.H.I.*, xiii–xiv.)

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[35] The Hindu genius, which we often think of as essentially mystical and fanciful, revealed, in all aspects of social, political and economic life, incontestable gifts of organization.

[36] Thanks to the gods and to Sarasvati we have sufficient proof that India—despite the horse-sacrifice, the Upaniṣads, Buddhism, caste, and the brāhmaṇs—was in many respects a country just like any other, very much alive and progressive, in love with the arts, with festivals, with literature, by no means gloomy, but witty, at times even voltairean, easily amused and very amusing.

[37] The India of the rājās, the kings of kings and the great feudal chiefs, is worthy of our attention. She is not, as is often said, a chaotic mass from time to time vainly shaken up by the ambition of potentates and the turbulence of princes. She is of truly historical interest. Not only does this India reveal at once the warlike spirit of dynasts and Rajputs and the solidity of complex administrative and commercial bodies, but she is also the scene of the conflict of a certain number of states pursuing precise economic and political ends.

In a footnote to this passage he develops this point more precisely, and gives his own views on the recurring themes of Indian political history:

> 'Parmi les lois évidentes de l'histoire de l'Inde, la nécessité où sont les pouvoirs gangétiques d'assurer la sécurité de leurs domaines et de la voie Jumnā-Gange en soumettant ou en "déracinant" les chefs ou les clans de nord et de sud qui les menacent; d'entreprendre vers Tāmraliptī et l'Orissa (Aśoka, Samudragupta, Harṣa) pour garder l'accès à la mer orientale; de fermer la porte du Nord-Ouest, soit en occupant le Penjab (les Mauryas seuls y réussirent), soit du moins en tenant les districts entre le bassin du Gange et de l'Indus (Guptas, Harṣa, Pratihāras); d'annexer le Mālava et ses annexes, les portes du golfe de Cambaye nécessaires au commerce.
>
> 'On voit bien aussi que les souverains du Mahārāṣṭra, qui est situé derrière les Ghats, convoitent les ports du Konkan, et sont géographiquement et économiquement contraints de disputer le Mālava aux pouvoirs gangétiques. La même géographie veut qu'ils s'installent, chaque fois que c'est possible, dans les riches districts côtiers de la mer orientale, portes de l'Extrême-Orient.
>
> 'Les guerres des souverains de Kāñcī (Pallavas, Colas) contre leurs voisins s'expliquent, de même, par de profondes raisons. . . .'[38]

Restrained generalizations of this limited type, based firmly on historical evidence, are a world removed from the facile moralizing of Smith, or for that matter of many other historians of India, both Indian and western.

In his works I can find no trace of de la Vallée Poussin's 'fundamental presuppositions', of his ideas of history generally, or of his notions of the causal factors of the historical process. Perhaps, not being a professional

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In my opinion a certain indologist, usually very shrewd in his judgements, was mistaken when he wrote that until the eleventh century the wars of India were simply struggles between rival dynasties, devoid of all significance. I think it is possible to show that these dynasties were defending the permanent interests of the country they ruled, interests which may truly be called 'national'.

[38] Among the obvious laws of the history of India is the necessity in which the Gangetic powers are placed of ensuring the safety of their domains and of the Jumna–Ganges route by subordinating or 'uprooting' the chiefs or clans who may threaten them to the north or south; of expanding towards Tāmralipti and Orissa (Aśoka, Samudragupta, Harṣa) to protect their access to the eastern sea; of closing the gate of the North West, either by occupying the Panjāb (in which only the Mauryas succeeded), or at least by holding the districts between the Ganges Basin and the Indus (Guptas, Harṣa, Pratihāras); and of annexing Mālava and its dependencies, the ports of the gulf of Cambay which are necessary for commerce.

It is also quite clear that the rulers of Mahārāṣṭra, which is situated behind the Ghats, coveted the ports of the Konkan, and were compelled for geographical and economic reasons to dispute the control of Mālava with the Gangetic powers. The same geography led them to establish themselves whenever possible in the rich coastal districts of the eastern sea, the gates of the Far East.

The wars of the rulers of Kāñci (Pallavas, Colas) against their neighbours may similarly be explained by sound reasons.

historian, he had none, but shared the view of the man in the street, that the historian's task is merely to tell the story of the human past as accurately and honestly as possible.

Though de la Vallée Poussin is said to have had no sympathy for the Buddhism which he studied, lack of sympathetic understanding is not apparent in his three historical works. He views ancient India with dispassion, and he sees little in it to praise or blame; but the passages which we have quoted, and numerous others, seem to me to show a deep realization of the essential character of ancient Indian civilization, an ability to grasp imaginatively the essentials of its culture. This calm unimpassioned sympathy may not be far removed from the Buddhist cardinal virtue of *metta*. Can it be that de la Vallée Poussin was more influenced by the Buddhism which he studied than he himself realized?

PART II. INDIAN HISTORIANS

Sir R. G. Bhandarkar (1837–1925)

In the nineteenth century several Indian scholars, notably Bhagwanlal Indraji, Bhau Daji, and Rajendralal Mitra, made valuable contributions to historical studies, but their work chiefly consisted of the editing of inscriptions and manuscripts, and of papers of limited scope on various special problems of early Indian history. The well-known Bengali writer Romesh Chunder Dutt produced several works on early history, but these cannot be considered as works of original scholarship, and their value to the present-day historian is negligible. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar was the earliest important indigenous historian of ancient India. A very versatile scholar, he also worked on Sanskrit and Prākrit grammar, religion, and philosophy, and his contributions in these fields are probably quite as important as his historical works. He was a great propagandist in favour of social reform, and, like Dutt, used his historical knowledge in numerous semi-popular papers and lectures, to show that many of the most cherished customs of the conservative Hinduism of his day had little or no foundation in the religion of more ancient times. In the realm of political history he produced two very valuable monographs: *The Early History of the Deccan* (*B.C.W.* iii, 1–198), published as part of the *Bombay Gazetteer* in 1884, and *A Peep into the Early History of India* (*B.C.W.* i, 1–61), a history of India from the beginning of the Mauryan Period to the end of the Gupta Empire, which was first published in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1900. He also wrote numerous shorter papers on more specialized topics, among which the most important for our purpose is *The Critical, Comparative and Historical Method of Inquiry as applied to Sanskrit*

Scholarship and Philology and Indian Archaeology (*B.C.W.* i, 362–93), the text of a lecture given in 1888, a very strong plea for scientific method in Indological studies.

Bhandarkar evidently loved his native land, but his more popular writings show no trace of anti-British feeling. Rather he appears to have been an earnest supporter of the British connection, and, while in no way losing faith in his own culture and traditions, he had a real affection for Britain, and for Germany, with whose Sanskrit scholars he was in contact. His attitude to history was that of the nineteenth century; he would probably have agreed with Ranke, whose works he may have known, that the task of the historian was to describe the past as it actually was. In the Introduction to his *Peep* he summarizes his ideas on the duty of the historian:

> 'In dealing with all these materials one should proceed on such principles of evidence as are followed by a judge. One must in the first place be impartial, with no particular disposition to find in the materials before him (*sic*) something that will tend to the glory of his race and country, nor should he have an opposite prejudice against the country or its people. Nothing but dry truth should be his object; and he should in every case determine the credibility of the witness before him and probability or otherwise of what is stated by him. He should ascertain whether he was an eye-witness or a contemporary witness, and whether in describing a certain event he himself was not open to the temptation of exaggeration or to the influence of the marvellous. None of the current legends should be considered to be historically true, but an endeavour should be made to find any germ of truth that there may be in them by evidence of another nature.' (*B.C.W.* i, 4.)

He repeats the analogy of the judge nearly twenty years later, in his last published work, the *Presidential Address to the First Oriental Conference, Poona, 1919*, when, in a remark which is evidently chiefly meant for Vincent Smith, he adds that some European scholars seem to have taken on the role of prosecuting counsel (*B.C.W.* i, 320). In the same speech he attacks the common tendency of the Indian scholar 'towards rejecting foreign influence on the development of his country's civilization and to claim (*sic*) high antiquity for some of the occurrences in its history' (*B.C.W.* i, 319–20).

Bhandarkar was far more critical of his sources than were many European historians of ancient India, and, in a very lengthy review of the *Early History*, he finds much fault with Vincent Smith on this score (*B.C.W.* i, 511 ff.). Elsewhere he writes: 'Before admitting the narrative contained in any work to be historical, one ought to ask oneself whether the object of the author was to please and instruct the reader, and excite the feeling of wonder, or to record events as they occurred' (*B.C.W.* i, 365). The

Sanskrit Epics and the Purāṇas, judged by this criterion, are found wanting, and the king-lists contained in the latter texts are declared confused and corrupt (ibid. i, 366). Bhandarkar, by a critical handling of the Purāṇic lists of the Sātavāhana kings in the light of epigraphic and other evidence, succeeded in producing a chronology which is now generally accepted, at least approximately, as against that of Vincent Smith, whose credulous attitude to the Purāṇas resulted in a chronology which few scholars now support.

Bhandarkar's fundamental presuppositions probably little affected his major historical work. He was an earnestly religious man, a member of the reformed Prarthana Samaj, but, unlike some twentieth-century European historians, his works do not show any evidence of a belief in divine intervention as an important causal factor in human history. He maintained several of the most widespread fallacies of the nineteenth century; for instance, at least in the first part of his life, he believed that language was a mark of race, and that speakers of kindred languages must be of common stock (*B.C.W.* i, 390). In the same period he declared himself a believer in what he called 'the inexorable law of the survival of the fittest' (*B.C.W.* i, 393). But such ideas seem to have played little part in his historical thinking. With remarkable modesty he gives his own valuation of his work in the introduction to his most important historical monograph, *The Early History of the Deccan*: 'This does not pretend to be a literary production, but merely a congeries of facts' (*B.C.W.* iii, 4). For Bhandarkar the main question before the historian of early India was 'What happened?', not 'Why did it happen?' For many periods and aspects of the subject the first question, thirty years after his death, is still unanswered; and until the answer to the first question is found, any attempt at answering the second must be largely speculative. Let us not discourage speculation, but honestly recognize it as such.

H. C. Raychaudhuri

Throughout Bhandarkar's long life Indological studies were pressed into service as the handmaid of politics. From the time of Ram Mohan Roy their evidence had been quite legitimately used in favour of social reform, and towards the end of the nineteenth century the glories of the past were more and more cited by nationalists and patriots in order to encourage the rising nationalist spirit of India. Svami Dayanand Sarasvati, the Theosophists Mme Blavatsky and Mrs. Annie Besant, and Svami Vivekananda, all with different emphasis encouraged the belief (which may in some respects be justified) that ancient India at her best reached a degree of spiritual and moral development far above that of the contemporary West; and, from the time of Dayanand onwards, it was even believed in some quarters that ancient India had possessed scientific and technical knowledge little if at all inferior to that of nineteenth-century Europe. The inclination to claim a very high antiquity for ancient Indian civilization, generally on the basis of comparatively late tradition, was widespread; thus the nationalist leader, B. G. Tilak, a very able Sanskritist, sought to prove from astronomical data that the *Ṛg Veda* was composed about 4000 B.C.,[39] as against Max Müller's date, 1200 B.C., which was most popular among European scholars of the time. Attempts to throw back the antiquity of the Vedas, and of the events in the Epic and Purāṇic tradition, to impossibly ancient periods are still being made by a few patriotic Indian scholars, despite the discovery of the Indus civilization, which seems certainly pre-Vedic and must have survived well into the second millennium B.C.

As the nationalist movement progressed, and as slow steps were taken in the direction of more representative government for India, her ancient history was called upon to show that she was fitted by her traditions for democracy and self-government. The most important examples of this practice are to be found in the works of K. P. Jayaswal (1881–1937), a lawyer who was also a brilliant Sanskritist. If we use Bhandarkar's analogy, Jayaswal appears more often in the role of counsel for the defence than in that of impartial judge. In his most famous work, *Hindu Polity* (1918), he sought to show that representative institutions had existed in ancient India, that the ancient Indian king was not an 'oriental despot' but a constitutional monarch, and that the states generally known as republics were in fact little different in constitution from the republics of the contemporary West. In order to prove his thesis Jayaswal employed a large range of sources, but used them in the manner of a barrister trying to win a favourable judgement, emphasizing every passage which tended to support his case, and interpreting it in the most favourable light, while virtually ignoring the evidence which went against him. *Hindu Polity* was an enormous success, and is still widely read. I believe it has played a very real part in the movement for India's independence.

Interesting is Jayaswal's attempt to prove that the king was not the ultimate owner of the land in ancient India, in which he succeeded to his own satisfaction by ignoring or twisting the sense of the opposing evidence. The emphasis which he put on this conclusion seems, in 1956, to have little if any bearing on his main purpose, which was to show the existence of democracy in ancient India. I can only assume that he accepted the widespread doctrine of nineteenth-century liberal *laissez-faire* political philosophy, influenced by the individualist evolutionary philosophy of Herbert Spencer, that the private ownership of land was one of the hallmarks of advanced civilization. Many modern Indian politicians would scarcely agree with this assumption.

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[39] *Orion* (Bombay, 1893); *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* (Bombay, 1903).

More restrained in the treatment of his material than Jayaswal, R. K. Mookerji also turned his historical training to political purposes. His *History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity* (1912) seems to have been written to show that in this sphere ancient India kept abreast of the rest of the world, despite her loss of interest in seafaring in later times. Mookerji's *Local Government in Ancient India* (1919) was explicitly written to prove the case, which it does without undue special pleading, that elements of democracy existed in the village and district assemblies of Hindu India. His *Fundamental Unity of India* (1914) was likewise written to serve a political purpose. Several lesser historians also employed their talents for similar ends, and traces of propaganda of this kind can be found in many of the works of the period.

H. C. Raychaudhuri's *Political History of Ancient India*, in contrast to the monographs I have just mentioned, has no very obvious axe to grind. In so many respects it is the most important work of ancient Indian history written in the last forty years, for since its first publication in 1923 it has gone into six editions, and has been used as a standard text-book in all the colleges and universities of India, largely replacing Smith's *Early History*. Thus it has affected the historical thinking of a whole generation of Indians.

In general Raychaudhuri is cautious and restrained, a historian of the School of Bhandarkar, attempting to discover the 'dry truth'. Many students find his work dull, 'a congeries of facts'. The general reader with some interest in the subject may derive a great deal of pleasure from Smith's *Early History*; in Raychaudhuri he will find none. Raychaudhuri has no illusions about the character of his work: 'The Cimmerian veil of darkness that enshrouds not a few obscure spaces in the spectrum of the early history of this country cannot be lifted by the wand of the magician or the trick of the conjuror' (*P.H.A.I.*, viii).

The book is in fact a work of research, not only gathering together the data of earlier scholars, but making original contributions in almost every chapter. Raychaudhuri's brilliant attempt at making sense of the very tenuous data of the pre-Buddhist period earned the unqualified praise of de la Vallée Poussin, and his chronology of this period is, in my opinion, the only one which has any likelihood of approximating to truth. In many other respects the *Political History of Ancient India* shows itself to be the work of a first-class mind.

Like most historians of ancient India, Raychaudhuri betrays no definite historical philosophy, unless the fact that he frequently adduces parallels from European history (e.g. *P.H.A.I.* 188, 263, 264) can be taken to indicate that he believes history to follow a definite pattern. His work contains few value judgements, and the author's personality rarely shows itself. Only in a few passages do we catch a brief glimpse of the ardent nationalist, writing at a time when feelings were rising, and relations between rulers and ruled were deteriorating. A definite undertone of Hindu nationalism can be detected occasionally. Thus, in dealing with Alexander's invasion, though he passes no judgement on the invader, Raychaudhuri emphasizes the disunity of the petty states of North Western India, which facilitated the invasion, and makes much of the heroism of Porus. 'The danger threatening from foreign invaders' is more than once mentioned, and Indian kings such as Candragupta Maurya and Gautamīputra Sātakārṇī, who expelled the Greeks and Śakas, are extolled (e.g. *P.H.A.I.*, 185–6). Behind the dry factual style of the *Political History of Ancient India* it is possible to trace a strong conviction that India has been led astray by the doctrine of *ahiṃsā*. Thus it is suggested that the ruin of the Gupta Empire may have been in part due to the 'misplaced clemency' of Bālāditya towards Mihirakula (*P.H.A.I.*, 635). The most explicit judgement of this kind occurs in the course of Raychaudhuri's treatment of Aśoka. For Raychaudhuri Aśoka, though a great and noble king, was fundamentally a misguided idealist who ruined his empire by his renunciation of war and by his lenient and tolerant internal administration.

> 'Dark clouds were looming on the north-western horizon. India needed men of the calibre of Puru and Chandragupta to ensure her protection against the Yavana menace. She got a dreamer. Magadha after the Kalinga war frittered away her conquering energy in attempting a religious revolution as Egypt did under the guidance of Ikhnaton. The result was politically disastrous. . . . Aśoka's attempt to end war met with the same fate as the similar endeavour of President Wilson.' (*P.H.A.I.*, 347–8; cf. ibid., 365 and 359, where Aśoka is accused of decentralization.)

With a few exceptions such as this Raychaudhuri succeeds in keeping echoes of the contemporary political situation out of his work. They can often be heard, however, in varying timbres, in numerous other historical works of the inter-war period. Thus the archaeologist R. D. Banerji, in his *Age of the Imperial Guptas* (Banaras, 1933), glorifies the subjects of his treatise as the conquerors of the Śakas and Kuṣāṇas, who had invaded India some centuries earlier. In K. P. Jayaswal's *History of India, A.D. 150 to A.D. 350* (1933), the author attributes the same feat to the little-known dynasty of the Nāgas, the names of whose kings are almost lost in oblivion, and who, in the feeble light of the evidence, scarcely deserve the title of national liberators. The spirit of the times is also in evidence in Jayaswal's translation of part of the Buddhist text *Mañjuśrī-Mūlakalpa*, containing a muddled list of kings of northern India, with the title *An Imperial History of India* (1934).

Despite the troubled times and the seething national unrest and aspiration of the late nineteen-twenties and thirties, much solid work was done along the lines laid down by Bhandarkar. H. C. Ray's monumental *Dynastic History of Northern India* (2 vols., 1931–6), and K. A. Nilakanta Sastri's very detailed study *The Colas* (3 vols., 1935–7), are only two examples among many, and it is perhaps invidious to mention them.

A very noticeable feature of the inter-war years was the tendency towards regional nationalism in Indian historical writing. This was by no means new, and showed itself most clearly in those regions where ethnic and cultural differences were most pronounced. Thus the important Dacca University *History of Bengal*, the first volume of which was published in 1943, tends to over-emphasize the power of Bengali kings and goes to special efforts to exonerate Śaśāṅka, whom most earlier historians depicted as a sadistic tyrant. Similarly in the numerous works of V. R. R. Dikshitar the history of the Tamil country was handled in the spirit rather of a counsel for the defence than of a judge. Both Bengalis and Tamils claimed the lion's share of Indian influence in ancient South East Asia for themselves, and the extent of this influence, if we are to believe Dutch and French authorities, was often exaggerated by Indian scholars. The term 'Greater India', which became widely current in historical circles at the time, was a sign of the growing national pride in the part India had played in the civilization of Asia, while phrases such as 'Indian colonies in South East Asia', occurring time and time again in many contexts, were also indicative of the reactions of the historians to the political situation. Though I believe there is little or no evidence that large-scale emigration of Indians to South East Asia ever took place in early times, and though none of the ruling families of early South East Asia can be proved to be of Indian descent, the idea that once India too had had her colonies was an attractive one in the contemporary atmosphere of resurgent nationalism and pan-Asianism.

The History and Culture of the Indian People

Since 1947 many works on ancient Indian history have been written in India, of which undoubtedly the most important is the great collective *History and Culture of the Indian People*. Of the ten projected volumes of this work four have already appeared,[40] covering the period from the earliest times to the invasions of Mahmūd. The significance of this work, as the first important general history produced in independent India, is not to be minimized. It is sponsored by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan of Bombay, the founder and president of which, the Hon. K. M. Munshi, a well-known nationalist politician, has himself written introductory chapters to each of the volumes. The chief editor of the series, Professor R. C. Majumdar, is among the best known of the older generation of Indian historians, and has himself contributed many of the most important chapters on political history.

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[40] By 1956.

The most striking innovation in the treatment of Indian history in this work is its periodization. The editors divide India's past into three periods—the ancient, to A.D. 1000, the medieval, from 1000 to 1818, and the modern, from 1818 onwards. Of the ten volumes the four which have already appeared are devoted to the ancient period, a surprising change of emphasis, which is vigorously defended by Majumdar:

> 'The contribution of different ages to the evolution of national history and culture should be the main criterion of their relative importance, though the space devoted to each should also be largely determined by the amount of historical material available. There is, no doubt, a dearth of material for the political history of ancient India, but this is to a large extent made up for by the corresponding abundance on the cultural side.' (*H.C.I.P.* i, 23.)

The first volume of the ten, *The Vedic Age*, is from the point of view of scholarship markedly inferior to the others, which in their treatment of disputed points are generally unadventurous but sound. In this first volume we can perhaps detect the hand of Majumdar's colleague in the work of editing, Professor A. D. Pusalkar, primarily a Sanskritist, whose nationalist fervour is not as strongly controlled as Majumdar's by restrained and critical historical scholarship. The weakness of this volume lies largely in the fact that it commits many of the faults which Bhandarkar condemned in his fellow historians, claiming an exaggerated antiquity for Indian civilization and placing too much reliance on tradition. Two chapters, sixty-two pages in all, are devoted to 'traditional history' on the lines of Pargiter, and a brief appendix outlines the arguments in favour of the theory that the original home of the Āryans was India. For the latter the chief editor is frankly apologetic:

> 'Although few scholars today believe India to be the original home of the Aryans this theory has naturally a sentimental appeal to Indians and has therefore been discussed in some detail in an appendix to Chapter X.' (*H.C.I.P.* i, 26.)

Similarly he damns Pargiter's Purāṇic chronology with faint praise, followed by the telling phrase: 'This must not, of course, be confused with history proper' (ibid., 27).

The treatment of the early period is also marred by naïve rationalizations, and the imposition of modern ideas on the past, reminiscent of Biblical history as taught in old-fashioned sunday schools—thus, for instance, 'fasts are so often recommended in ritual that the inference becomes irresistible that the ancient Indians were fully aware of their beneficial effects on health' (*H.C.I.P.* i, 522).

Though he disarms criticism by admitting that he is not a 'scientific historian' (*H.C.I.P.* i, 7), the most interesting remarks on the philosophy of history, as applied to India, come from K. M. Munshi. In the introductory pages to the first volume he, like Vincent Smith, proclaims his belief in the pragmatic value of history as a means of assessing the course of events, and shows that he looks on India as a corporate entity with a common will:

> 'History as I see it is being consciously lived by Indians. Attempts to complete what has happened in the past form no small part of our modern struggle; there is a conscious as well as an unconscious attempt to carry life to perfection, to join the fragments of existence and to discover the meaning of the visions which they reveal. It is not enough, therefore, to conserve, record and understand what has happened; it is necessary also to assess the nature and direction of the momentous forces working through the life of India in order to appreciate the fulfilment which they seek.' (*H.C.I.P.* i, 7.)

On the following page Munshi writes of 'the efforts of the people to will themselves into an organic unity', and adds that:

> 'the central purpose of a historian must, therefore, be to investigate and unfold the values which age after age have inspired the inhabitants of a country to develop their collective will and to express it through the manifold activities of their life'. (*H.C.I.P.* i, 8.)

The theme of the 'collective will' often recurs in Munshi's general introduction, which concludes with the following proud instructions to the historian:

> 'The modern historian of India must approach her as a living entity with a central continuous urge, of which the apparent life is a mere expression. Without such an outlook it is impossible to understand India, which . . . stands today three hundred and fifty million strong, with a new apparatus of state, determined not to be untrue to its ancient self, and yet to be equal to the highest demands of modern life.' (*H.C.I.P.* i, 12.)

In each of Munshi's introductions to the three succeeding volumes the collective mind, outlook, or will, recurs (*H.C.I.P.* ii, vii, x; iii, vii; iv, vii). In fact, the author appears to have a definite philosophy of history, which possesses features taken from Rousseau, Hegel, Tolstoi, and Marx. Moreover, like Vincent Smith, he derives morals for the present from the history of the past; thus he tells us that 'Aśoka was the first founder of a welfare state. . . . But welfare states, which eschew armed coercion of recalcitrant elements, are not known to survive' (*H.C.I.P.* ii, xvii). With this passage we may compare the general emphasis on resistance to invasion which pervades all four volumes, and the occasional appeals to patriotic sentiment, such as Professor Majumdar's characterization of the second century A.D. as the time when:

> 'the mighty Sātavāhana rulers bar the gates of the Deccan to the further advance of the foreigners and the sturdy republican tribes of the North once more unfurl the banner of freedom and uphold the dignity of the motherland'. (*H.C.I.P.* ii, xliv.)

In general, however, the attitude of Majumdar to his subject is admirably impartial, and his wise words in the general introduction to the series, in which he criticizes the followers of both Smith and Jayaswal, and attacks those historians who paint ancient India in too garish colours, are particularly commendable at a time such as this, when national pride may all too easily lead the historian to portray a false or exaggerated picture of his country's past. Majumdar has few illusions about the work of earlier historians, and if anything takes too pessimistic a view of it, declaring that 'Indian history, in a comprehensive sense, has so far been neither written nor even conceived in a proper spirit' (*H.C.I.P.* i, 45–46). He is not afraid to side with those who disparage Hindu India on certain particular issues; thus he tells us that ancient Indian political history is 'dull and lifeless, and, being devoid of general interest, makes no passionate appeal to the human mind' (ibid., 42); and on the question of historical writing in ancient India, disagreeing in this even with Vincent Smith, he courageously states his conviction that it was virtually non-existent (ibid., 47).

The History and Culture of the Indian People is the work of nationalist historians writing for their own nationals at a time when nationalist feeling in India has never been more intense. In these circumstances it demands admiration and respect, for, except perhaps in the first volume, its authors have in general succeeded in maintaining a high level of scholarship, without giving way to the temptation unduly to force their material into the desired pattern. Where value judgements occur they are usually more or less restrained and fair. In this connection I quote the judgement of the venerable Professor R. K. Mookerji on Alexander, which shows how, viewed through Indian eyes, events and men seem very different from their appearance as seen through the eyes of the West:

> 'The only permanent result of Alexander's campaign was that it opened up commerce between Greece and India and paved the way for a more intimate intercourse between the two. And this was achieved at a cost of untold suffering inflicted upon India—massacre, rapine and plunder

on a scale till then without precedent in her annals, but repeated in later days by more successful invaders like Sultān Mahmūd, Tamerlane and Nādir Shāh. In spite of the halo of romance that Greek writers have woven round the name of Alexander, the historian of India can regard him only as the precursor of these recognized scourges of mankind.' (*H.C.I.P.* ii, 53.)

This is something which needed saying; and, if such judgements can ever in any sense be considered true, except as expressions of the author's opinion, I believe that, at least in his approach to Alexander's Indian campaign, Mookerji is a more impartial historian than the hero-worshipping Smiths and Tarns, who have never been able to view history from the angle of the East.

Conclusion

In the last fifty years of British rule in India and in the first decade of Indian independence, it would have been surprising if historians on either side had not from time to time used their writings as propaganda. It is no less natural that their more serious work should be coloured to some extent by the contemporary situation. It is rather to be wondered at that in both India and Britain many historians seem to have laboured on, without allowing their judgements to be seriously swayed by current Indian problems; Vincent Smith may be balanced by the joint authors of the first volume of the *Cambridge History of India* (1922), Jayaswal by Raychaudhuri. In India as in England, most of the better historians have aimed at the ideal set by Bhandarkar, and have tried, often with considerable success, to be judges rather than barristers.

Attempts to trace parallels between past and present, which are very common in indigenous writing on early Indian history, do not really invalidate this conclusion, except in extreme cases such as that of Jayaswal. If, when off his guard, the Indian historian tends to perpetuate the myth of Swami Dayanand, that all that is good in modern life is to be found in embryo in ancient India, his western reader must understand the motives, conscious or unconscious, which impel him to do so. We have seen that Bhandarkar tried to show that, in comparison with the degenerate Hinduism of his early days, ancient Indian customs and social institutions were comparatively rational. Jayaswal found democracy in ancient India. Later the same historian, and others with him, found militarism and patriotic nationalism there. Munshi, as we have seen, declares that ancient India knew the welfare state. The next phase is already on the way—the Communist leader S. A. Dange has found evidence of primitive Communism in the *Ṛg Veda*[41] while, in a semi-popular work, Professor Majumdar, himself apparently by no means sympathetic to communism, has declared that a certain *dānastuti* of the *Ṛg Veda* is 'a remarkable hymn which the advocates of communism may cite as the earliest enunciation of their doctrine based on ethical principles'.[42]

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[41] *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery* (Bombay, 1951).

Such passing remarks as the latter, in the course of serious attempts to discuss Indian history in a scholarly spirit, do no harm, and enliven the writing for the general reader. More serious are the sustained efforts at forcing the present upon the past, such as those of Jayaswal. But though these have had an appreciable effect on the intelligent reading public few competent historians have been led astray by them. Still more dangerous is anti-Muslim prejudice, which can be traced in the works of several Hindu writers, but never in the degree to which it affected Lassen.

Perhaps the most serious danger to sound scholarship in the study of ancient India is credulity towards the sources, especially towards those which claim to tell the history of the remote past. Pargiter's unfortunate attempt at making sense of the Purāṇas has produced an aftermath of wasted effort in the form of several monographs in which able Indian scholars ingeniously juggle with king-lists, the names in which have little more historical validity than those of the legendary pre-Saxon kings recorded in medieval English chronicles. Following the bad example of Lassen and Smith, sources are still too often taken at their face value, without adequate analysis. The warnings of de la Vallée Poussin, who, of all the historians of ancient India known to me, approached his sources in the most scholarly spirit, have had little effect in India, largely because they remain untranslated. Thus we still find certain Indian scholars accepting the plots of dramas such as *Mālavikāgnimitra* and *Mudrārākṣasa* as sober history, with little or no criticism. There are still ardent defenders of the tradition that Vikramāditya drove the Śakas from Ujjain in 58 B.C., though all archaeological and epigraphic evidence tends against it. Good authorities may still be found who accept Harṣa's 60,000 war elephants and Bhāskaravarman's 30,000 ships, both on the strength of Hsüan Tsang. Dharmapāla's claim to have received homage from the king of remote Gandhāra is still believed in by many historians. I do not attribute this credulity to any special characteristic in the Indian mind, but rather to the bad example of the European scholars who laid the foundations on which contemporary Indians work, and especially to Vincent Smith, who wrote at a time when in many fields textual exegesis was thoroughly developed—when German scholars had done much to trace the sources of the *Nibelungenlied*, and when Biblical criticism had long left behind the crude method of rejecting the supernatural and combining the remaining material as coherently as possible. The latter method is that still used by many historians of India. It will often work for the medieval period, where the exaggerated claims of one king can be checked by comparing them with the equally exaggerated claims of his neighbour. For the earlier period, where there are few contemporary epigraphs or none, subtler methods are necessary, involving very thorough analysis of the available sources, and careful comparison of the resultant data with the scanty evidence of archaeology. This technique the historian of India has yet to learn; until subjected to exhaustive analysis neither the *Mahābhārata* nor the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be used as a source of history, and, even when so analysed, they may yield little material on political history, though much on social.

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[42] *Ancient India* (Banaras, 1952), p. 54.

The tendency to accept such sources as the Epics, the Purāṇas, and the Buddhist scriptures at their face value is by no means universal, and is to be found in European historians of India as well as in Indian. Several chapters of the first volume of the *Cambridge History of India* would need rewriting, if judged by the most rigid standards of historical criticism. We must realize that the political history of India before the rise of the Mauryas is known with any degree of certainty only in broadest outline—and this applies also to much of the history of post-Mauryan times. The details which appear in most of the works that I have discussed are little more than possibilities, and must be recognized as such. A new approach to the sources, in a more strongly critical spirit, and with the aid of archaeology, may add to our certainty, but the need of this seems hardly felt in most quarters.

On 'fundamental presuppositions' there is little to be said. Historians of ancient India have worked, in general, without explicit philosophies of history—Lassen's Hegelianism and Munshi's doctrine of the general will are exceptional. But ideas rather like those of Munshi may perhaps be implicit in the work of many Indian historians of the more romantic type. Traces of Marxism are beginning to appear in the writings of some younger historians, though this philosophy does not appear to have affected any of the authorities I have mentioned.[43] In my own opinion, it is best that the historian of ancient India should continue to work with a minimum of 'fundamental presuppositions', in an attempt to discover with some degree of certainty 'what happened', for the history of ancient India is at present so tenuous that it can be fitted into almost any preconceived pattern. Even questions of causation, in the present state of our knowledge, are, with few exceptions, virtually unanswerable. The historian may set himself interesting problems such as 'Why did the first great Indian empire arise in Magadha?', 'What caused the downfall of the Mauryas?', 'Why did the Hindus fare so badly at the hands of the Muslim invaders?' He may bring to bear on such questions very wide learning, a brilliant and rationally controlled imagination, and years of deep thought. Yet, in the present state of our knowledge, he can give only one honest answer to them—'I don't know'—no theory which he may put forward can be more than a logical possibility. I would not disparage controlled speculation of this type—it is a very enjoyable intellectual pastime; but the historian of ancient India needs more reliable factual knowledge before he can answer the many questions such as these with anything approaching certainty.

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[43] Marxists are only just beginning to study ancient India. S. A. Dange's book, mentioned above, which is very unscholarly; Walter Ruben's *Einführung in der Indienkunde* (Berlin, 1952), and a few articles by Professor D. D. Kosambi and the Soviet Professor Ilyin are the only significant Marxist contributions to ancient Indian history that I know of (1956).

No historical proposition, not even one as universally accepted as, say, 'The Battle of Waterloo occurred in 1815', has absolute mathematical certainty. But this, and many similar propositions, have such a high degree of probability that they may be taken as virtually certain. The further back we go in time, and the fewer our sources, the less certain our history becomes. Many of the propositions almost universally believed by historians of ancient India—for example, 'Prasenajit died at the gates of Rājagṛha', 'Aśoka had a son named Mahendra', or 'Gopāla was elected king of Bengal by a great gathering of the people'—are admittedly incapable of disproof, and are acceptable to the older school of scissors-and-paste historians, who are ready to believe any statement which is not inherently improbable and is not contradicted by another source which seems more reliable. In fact, all three of the above propositions, and many like them, have little more than a faint degree of probability, because the sources on which they are based are untrustworthy.[44] Before ancient Indian history can be placed on a firmer footing many old certainties must be given up, and the whole edifice rebuilt from the bare foundations. Such a drastic reconstruction may destroy many certainties, and many of the chapters of early Indian history now earnestly believed in by nearly everybody may be proved unreliable. But only on such a basis will it be possible to understand the process of the Āryanization of India, or to trace the phases of the early development of the Hindu social and political order. Indology needs historians of the school of Bhandarkar, armed with a technique of source criticism subtler than that which has hitherto been employed on Indian material. When the facts are more firmly established the underlying causes and the overall patterns may become plain.

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[44] I regret that I cannot justify this statement in a paper which is already over-long. To do so would require another paper almost as long as this one.

21. MODERN MUSLIM HISTORICAL WRITING ON MEDIEVAL MUSLIM INDIA[1]

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Although this paper can be no more than what Germans would call an introduction to prolegomena to a critique, it seemed worth undertaking not only because of its intrinsic interest, but also because the opening shots at the subject appeared likely to straddle an even more important target, the story of Muslim nationalism in South Asia in the twentieth century. This story is perhaps still too painful or too personal to be written yet, but it might be useful to cut a few keys to it now even if those keys have, for a while, to be laid aside.

The first works in English on medieval Muslim India by Muslims did not, so far as I can ascertain, appear until the nineteen-twenties. In the light of Sir Saiyid Ahmad's interest in Indo-Muslim history—his *Ta'rīkh-i-Hindūstān* (1846), his *Jām-i-Jam* (on Mughal sovereigns from Tīmūr to Bahādur Shāh), his *Āthār-i-Sanādīd* (1847), or of Zakā-Allāh's *Ta'rīkh-i-Hindūstān* in Urdu in the eighteen-seventies or of the co-operation of Muslim scholars, including Sir Saiyid Ahmad himself, in the editing of medieval Persian histories in the *Bibliotheca Indica* series, it is impossible to conclude that this time-lag was due to unfamiliarity with historical thinking in general or lack of interest in medieval Muslim India in particular.

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[1] List of books on the medieval Muslim period of South Asian history by modern Muslim writers in English which are referred to. The list is arranged in chronological order and the letters after each volume indicate their classification in terms of the three categories on page 297.

1. Muhammad Habib, *Mahmud of Ghaznin* (Aligarh, 1927) (A).
2. Muhammad Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Maḥmūd of G̲h̲azna* (Cambridge, 1931) (B).
3. Wahid Husain, *Administration of Justice during the Muslim Rule in India* (Calcutta, 1934).
4. Zahir ud-din Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times* (Bombay, 1935) (C).
5. Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf, 'Life and Conditions of the People of Hindūstān (1200–1550 A.D.) —(Mainly based on Islamic Sources)'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Ser. 3, vol. i, 1935, Letters, pp. 103–359.
6. S. M. Jaffar, *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb* (Peshawar, 1936) (C); *Education in Muslim India* (1000–1800 A.D.) (Peshawar, 1936); *Medieval India* (place and date of publication unknown); *Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India* (place and date of publication unknown); *Medieval India under Muslim Kings* (Vol. II. *The Rise and Fall of the Ghaznavids*) (place and date of publication unknown).
7. Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* (London, 1936) (C).
8. Agha Mahdi Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq* (London, 1938) (B).
9. Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tauhīd* (Lahore, 1940) (rather borderline between the history of religion and theology).
10. Muhammad Bashir Ahmad, *The Administration of Justice in Medieval India* (Aligarh, 1941) (C).
11. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhī* (Lahore, 1942) (B).
12. Harun Khan Sherwani, *Mahmud Gawan—The Great Bahmani Wazir* (Allahabad, 1942).
13. Abd al-Aziz, *The Imperial Treasury of the Mughals* (Lahore, 1942); *The Mansabdārī System and the Mughal Army* (Lahore, 1946); *Arms and Jewellery of the Indian Mughals* (Lahore, 1947).
14. A. B. M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Lahore, 1945) (B).
15. Muhammad Akbar, *The Administration of Justice by the Mughals* (Lahore, 1948).
16. Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi* (Lahore, 1949) (B).
17. Muhammad Habib, *Elliot and Dowson's History of India*, ii. Reprinted with an Introduction by Professor Habib (Aligarh, 1952) (A).
18. Harun Khan Sherwani, *The Bahmanis of the Deccan* (Hyderabad Deccan, 1953) (A).

The obvious explanation of the delay in writing history in English after the introduction of education in English among Indian Muslims—that they were 'otherwise engaged'—may prove the most fruitful. For the principal preoccupation of Sir Saiyid Ahmad and his followers after his return from England in 1870 and the foundation of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875, was religious rather than historical. Sir Saiyid wished to reinterpret Islam in terms of nineteenth-century liberal values and to study the message of the Qur'ān and the life of the Prophet in order to prove that that message and that life were not incompatible with progress, science, liberty and virtue as Victorian Englishmen understood them. Sir Saiyid himself, in returning to the Qur'ān and to Muḥammad saying 'all else (is) subsidiary and of secondary importance', rejected *taqlīd*, *ijmā*ʻ and the authority of the orthodox schools of Muslim law and thus by implication rejected medieval Muslim religious history as it had actually expressed itself. Sir Saiyid treated Islam more as a system of thought than as a way of life in history.

Sir Saiyid's coadjutors and successors at Aligarh and elsewhere continued to be more interested in the possibilities of Islam as a religion in the modern world than as a component of medieval civilization in South Asia. In Khuda Bakhsh's *Essays Indian and Islamic* (1912), the emphasis was on proving Islam to be a faith not inimical to progress and on the need for reform in contemporary Muslim society. He suggested the need to banish politics (and therefore history?) from the programme of Muslim activity in South Asia. Moreover, those writers like Ḥālī, Zakā-Allāh, and Shiblī, who diverged from Sir Saiyid Ahmad in wholeheartedly accepting Islam as it had actually grown in history, and who exhorted Muslims to pride in their past, viewed that past as more Islamic than Indian—they were interested in Muslim civilization under the 'Abbāsids or under the Ummayads in Spain rather than in the civilization of medieval Muslim India.

The further development of the South Asian Muslim cultural revival—the assertion not merely that Islam was not hostile to civilization and progress but was indeed civilization and progress itself, the school of Amir Ali—expressed itself in the cult of Muḥammad as the perfect man and the glorification of Muslim achievements in art, literature, science, and hygiene outside South Asia. Thus, until the First World War Muslims in South Asia were mainly occupied in arming their religion against western criticism, rather than in arming their community politically against either the British Government or against non-Muslims in South Asia.

There may, however, be other supplementary explanations of the neglect of medieval Muslim history in South Asia. It was not expedient soon after the banishment of Bahādur Shāh and the destruction of the last vestiges of Mughal culture at Delhi and at a time when it was hoped to conciliate the British politically, to remind the world of the power which Muslims had once enjoyed in South Asia and to provoke fears that the loss of this power was so much regretted that the Muslims must always be fundamentally disloyal. In any event, for those who had lived through the sack of Delhi and the repression of the Muslim aristocracy thereafter, it was perhaps too painful to study a South Asia in which Muslims had been all-powerful.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that Sir Saiyid Ahmad and the Aligarh school were, as some of their descendants still are, resolutely non-communal in politics. To study the history of medieval India, particularly with the methods of history dominant in historical writing on South Asia in the late nineteenth century, with its literal reliance on 'authorities', could only have resulted in antagonism between Hindus, whose pusillanimous ancestors were, in medieval Muslim histories, usually being sent to hell, and Muslims whose virile ancestors were always doing the despatching. Sir Saiyid and the Aligarh school were educationists not politicians; they conceived the differences between Hindu and Muslim as of the same order as those between Catholic and Protestant in nineteenth-century England; nothing should be said to prevent the growth of a sense of nationhood transcending religious differences.

Finally, it is possible that the balance of the history curriculum at Aligarh, with its emphasis upon English and European history, was tilted against the study of medieval Muslim history. Nor, one suspects, was this tilting of the balance regretted at Aligarh in the period before 1914. Only in the study of western history and of the western approach to history could Muslims discover and understand the new world pressing in upon them.

In sum then, the interests of the western-influenced Muslim intelligentsia in South Asia before the nineteen-twenties were more Islamic than Indian and more religious than historical.

The first books to be discussed appeared in a decade when the English-educated Muslim intelligentsia were turning from education to politics. Already in 1912 Abdul Kalam Azad had founded the newspaper *Al Ḥalāl* and Zafar Ali Khan the Calcutta *Zamīndār*. These had been followed by Muhammad Ali's *Comrade* and its Urdu counterpart *Hamdard* at Delhi.

The Montagu Declaration of August 1917, the reforms of 1919, looked forward to self-government for India. From 1919 to 1922 India was in political turmoil with the non-co-operation and the K̲h̲ilāfat movements. Muslims were becoming both nationalist-minded and community-conscious. It would have been remarkable had they not dug deeper into their past in South Asia in order the more securely to stretch forth into their future.

In approaching Muslim historical writing on medieval Muslim India in the nineteen-twenties it must be remembered that Muslim historians were immigrants into an already settled colony. By 1925 Elphinstone, Elliot, and Dowson, Stanley Lane Poole, William Irvine, Henry Beveridge, Wolseley Haig, Vincent Smith, and W. H. Moreland among the British, and Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Ishwari Prasad, and C. Vaidya among the Hindus, had mapped out the territory and staked their claims. Either the Muslims had to challenge the whole land settlement or be content to prospect in the interstices of existing homesteads; whichever course they chose to adopt they were obliged to adapt their behaviour and modify their attitudes in relation to the existing settlers. Moreover, since they had been taught to use the same tools as those earlier settlers their own economy tended almost inescapably to conform with or to complement that which they found in being. That is not to say that Muslim historians of the nineteen-twenties and later did not challenge existing conceptions of medieval Indian history; they did, but often by merely asserting their opposites. They proposed to correct optical illusions about medieval India by prescribing different pairs of spectacles, not by advising therapeutic methods which would change the capacity of the eyes themselves.

In this paper I propose to discuss some modern Muslim historians of medieval Indian under three categories:

A. Those historians who feel that the things they share with the non-Muslim peoples of South Asia are more important than the things which they do not share.
B. Those who feel that the things which they do not share are more important than those they do.
C. Those who have not resolved the issue or are indifferent to it.

Space prevents comprehensiveness but a list of all the works within the scope of this paper, of which I am aware, will be found on p. 294. Periodical articles, introductions to translations, and editions and unpublished theses have had to be omitted from consideration.

A (i). Muhammad Habib, *Mahmud of Ghaznin* (Aligarh, 1927)

Professor Habib, who read Historia Moderna at Oxford (1916–20), states that this book was published to correct a recent tendency among Muslims in India to adore Sultan Maḥmūd as a saint. For Professor Habib, in 1927, Islam as a creed stands by the principles of the Qur'ān and the life of the Prophet. 'If Sultan Mahmud and his officers strayed from the straight path so much the worse for them.' Professor Habib opens with a discussion, in evolutionary and social terms, of the development of Islam; how the spiritual insight of the Prophet had faded until by the eleventh century A.D. Islam had become a creed for the protection of vested interests, no longer 'a worldwide force of democratic upheaval, but a matter of custom and tradition, at most a means for the salvation of the individual soul'. Professor Habib sees Maḥmūd of G̲h̲aznīn as a hero of the old Persian kind, enjoying power without morality and waging war in India not for religion but for the greed of glory and gold. He states that the Hindus knew that Maḥmūd's motives were economic when he plundered their temples and that no mandate of the *s̲h̲arī'at* sanctioned Maḥmūd's actions. Professor Habib regards Maḥmūd as a foreigner, an outsider, not to be revered by the Muslims of India as a true ancestor and hero of the faith in medieval India. That role is reserved to the C̲h̲is̲h̲tī saints and Sultan 'Alā' al-dīn K̲h̲aljī. 'With the proper history of *our* (my italics) country Maḥmūd had nothing to do. But we have inherited from him the most bitter drop in our cup. To later generations, Maḥmūd became the arch fanatic he never was; and in that incarnation he is still worshipped by such Indian Mussalmans as have cast off the teaching of Lord Krishna for their devotion to minor gods. Islam's worst enemies have ever been its own fanatical followers.'

Before writing this book it is clear that Professor Habib drank deep both of the teachings of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan and of western intellectual potions of a generation ago. There is the 'protestant' view of Islam as against the 'catholic'—the urge to return to the Prophet and away from the accretions of later ages. There is, too, the western distinction between religion as social and religion as personal, the western urge to study the interpenetration and interaction of religious, social, and economic factors in the life of a society, the organic revolutionary conception of society and of historical change. The whole tone of the book is rational, secular, urbane, and dispassionate. The author's political position at the time of publication appears to be that of an Indian nationalist who, though he speaks as a Muslim—for he feels the need to put Maḥmūd in a proper historical perspective—yet believes that differences in religion are private and personal and to be submerged in the larger unity of Indian nationhood.

A (ii). Muhammad Habib, Introduction to a Reprint of Elliot and Dowson's *History of India* (vol. ii, Aligarh, 1952)

The introduction to this volume—dedicated to Premier Jawaharlal Nehru as 'the guarantee of India's security and the sheet-anchor of her hopes'—is based upon the 'principles of Historical Materialism developed to suit the conditions of the East and in particular of India'. Dr. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami sums up these principles in a Preface. They are: (*a*) history proves conclusively that there is no chosen people; (*b*) the history of no country has any significance except in the context of world ideas; (*c*) the march of mankind is by revolutions and every revolution is an expansion, though within the limits of human rights; (*d*) this revolution may take place at the production level when, for example, a new invention changes the whole structure of society. Or it may take place at the ideological level when the existing institutions of society are morally challenged, while the instruments of production remained unchanged. Islam, according to Professor Habib, was such a revolution. 'The Quranic conception of God was, and can still be, a revolutionary force of incalculable value for the attainment of human welfare.' (*e*) In the march of mankind it is the masses—the worker and the peasant—that count most. (*f*) Mankind from the dawn of recorded history has been exploited by governing classes who live by depriving the peasant and the worker of the surplus value of his labour. All governing classes are wicked; they cannot be otherwise for their life values are wrongly estimated. A governing class can only live by misdeeds; otherwise it would not be a governing class. Still, 'some governing classes are better than others, better because they find it to their interest to offer less resistance to the basic normal urge of mankind to better his lot'. (*g*) Force is a wicked thing, but so far as the past is concerned force has been a fact. 'Force', says Marx, 'is the midwife of every society pregnant with a new one.' 'Believing with our beloved Mahatmaji that force is always a wrong, the historian has nevertheless to consider the fact that force that causes the maximum of good with the minimum of injury to human life is to be preferred to force that has worked in the reverse direction.'

Professor Habib first discusses the political and economic organization of ' 'Ajam' (the eastern Muslim world outside Arabia and India). 'The most important fact of the Middle Ages was the rise of Islam. . . . In the thought of the Prophet of Islam as revealed in the Quran and the Hadis (the Prophet's conversations *sic*) two basic ideas stand out—the principle of unity in the cosmic order and the principle of the brotherhood of those who believed in (the Prophet's) creed. Islam wrought one of the most vital and the most bloodless revolutions in human history. . . . Medina under the Prophet was a working-class republic. . . . There was no governing class and no subject people.' Although, Professor Habib says, no textual religious authority can be cited for the expansion of the doctrine of equality beyond the confines of the *umma*, 'still a governing class was a flat contradiction of the Prophet's teachings'. Professor Habib then asks what was the position of the Islamic revolution in world history. Only the school of

Marx and Engels can answer this question. 'The greatness of these two thinkers lies in the fact that representing ideologically the enslaved and oppressed of all times, all peoples and all lands, they transcend those discriminations of race, language, nationality, colour, and creed which have been the pith and marrow of all orthodox historians with their cheap platitudes and immense learning. This is not a question of scholarship; it is a question of vision.'

The history of Asia may be divided into an ancient period based upon the caste system or other varieties of involuntary servitude; a medieval period of large-scale imperial administrations based on free labour, free contract and free capital, but without freedom of thought; the early modern period of submission to European capitalistic imperialism due to the low standards of Eastern production which were continued from the Middle Ages; and lastly, the period of contemporary Asian revival. Professor Habib emphasizes that the Marxist condemnation of religion as a whole is no longer necessary as Islam is a true social-revolutionary religion.

Under the heading of 'The Urban Revolution in Northern India' Professor Habib states that the government of medieval India was neither foreign nor military. 'What is called the Muslim but is really the Ghorian conquest of India meant two things—first, the substitution of the Ghorian Turks for the "Thakurs" as the governing class; second, the enfranchisement of the Indian city workers who were obliged to live outside the city walls by the higher Hindu castes. The Turks emancipated them and this explains their success in maintaining their rule against foreign and domestic enemies alike. 'In spite of the continued efforts of three generations, the Mongols were unable to accomplish their great enterprise of conquering India. The post-revolutionary Indians were in no mood to be conquered. The Indian worker with his newly-won freedom (of which more presently) was determined to fight it out in every city and in every street. So India alone was able to stand against the Mongol invasions, which had shattered every state-power in east and west. And this new-found strength was entirely due to the urban revolution in northern India.'

This urban revolution was, says Professor Habib, followed under Sultan 'Alā' al-dīn K̲h̲aljī by a rural revolution. 'In substance, the great K̲h̲aljī emperor achieved two things—first, he relieved the low-caste cultivator from the oppression of the high-caste rural intermediary, and secondly he insured the safety of trade routes and the regular exchange of commodities between town and country.' 'Alā' al-dīn . . . 'was concerned exclusively with a patent, all-India injustice, the domination of the intermediary over the cultivator; and he liquidated the intermediaries as effectively as Chairman Mao Tse-Tung and the Communist Party have liquidated feudalism in China in the last three years. . . . But one thing was clear after the tremendous K̲h̲aljī adventure. India would never again become the land of caste privileges it had been for some centuries past. Whatever the future may assume, 'Alā 'al-dīn had assured one thing for all time. In all spheres of life, except marriage and personal laws, India would become what the Manusmriti so intensely hated—"a confusion of castes".'

A (iii). K. M. Ashraf, 'Life and Conditions of the People of Hindūstān (1200–1550 A.D.)—(Mainly based on Islamic Sources)'. *J.R.A.S. Bengal*, Ser. 3, vol. i, 1935, Letters.

This was originally a doctoral thesis of the University of London. It is a consideration of the status, habits and standard of life of different classes in medieval Indian society within the general area of the Delhi sultanate excluding, 'all references to the civil administration, the system of land revenue, the army, the system of transport, the ideas on education and the development of literature or even to the religious life of the people'. Dr. Ashraf has frozen and then sliced through the society of the time examining the various strata in the following divisions: the sultan as a public and a private person, the privileged classes (the nobility of sword and pen), domestics and slaves, the artisans and cultivators, both Hindu and Muslim. The work then describes the clothing, food, amusements, virtues and vices of the various classes, emphasizing all the time what is shared by Hindus and Muslims. For Dr. Ashraf the significant denominator is social class viewed in economic terms as 'haves' and 'have-nots', not in terms of religious allegiance. The picture is not dynamic but static; the work is an essay in dissection of a corpse not in description of a living, moving, changing organism. In this book the author treats classes as useful modes of social description, not as motive forces in history. Dr. Ashraf's outlook is secular and non-communal; he regards the Muslim '*ulamā* as worldly and the Delhi sultanate as un-Islamic. Although he havers somewhat over the issue he concludes that the introduction of Islam was not 'a fundamental revolution in the basic conditions of Indian life. . . . There was no cultural conflict between the Muslims and the Hindus. In fact the cultural forces were rapidly leading to a complete fusion between the two.' In this book Dr. Ashraf appears to be a nationalist convinced that India's problems were primarily social and economic, not religious or communal.

B (i). Muhammad Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of G͟hazna* (Cambridge University Press, 1931)

In a foreword to this, the published version of a Cambridge doctoral thesis, Sir Thomas Arnold states that it continues the old traditions of Muslim historiography. 'This literary tradition has been revived by a new school of historians—men acquainted with modern methods of research, trained to weigh evidence and arbitrate between different points of view.' Dr. Muhammad Nazim writes that he has attempted 'to exonerate him

(Maḥmūd) from the charge of fanaticism so often levelled against him and to show that his wars in India were not the haphazard movements of a predatory warrior but were the result of a well considered programme of conquest and annexations'.

Sir Thomas Arnold's comment that this book is a continuation of earlier Muslim historiographical tradition is perhaps nearer the mark than he realized, for it is a chronicle of events from the rise of Islam arranged by dynasties, as in the traditional manner of Muslim universal history. There is no suggestion or analysis of any economic, social, or religious factors which may have influenced the course of Maḥmūd's career. Nor is there unity of chronology or theme; events are arranged according to region.

Dr. Nazim regards Maḥmūd of G͟hazna not so much as a good Muslim in a religious sense but as a great Muslim in a historical sense. The charge of fanaticism is met by the asseveration that 'Maḥmūd is never said to have demolished a temple in time of peace' and 'the sultan was not a fanatic. He believed in the religious unity of the state and severely punished all dissenters. The Hindus rejected Islam as their national religion because of the fundamental and irreconcilable differences between Islam and Hinduism.'

Dr. Nazim reveals himself more as a Muslim than as an Indian nationalist, and more as a political Muslim than as a religious Muslim. His tone in speaking of the Hindus is rueful and deprecatory; as Maḥmūd of G͟hazna is said to have treated them as an imperialist rather than as a missionary or a crusader, they have apparently no real cause for complaint.

B (ii). Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhī* (first edition, Lahore, 1942)

This book is substantially Dr. Qureshi's Cambridge doctoral thesis. Dr. Qureshi regards the sultanate of Delhi as an integral expression of medieval Muslim civilization in general and emphasizes its Islamic much more than its Indian character. He is proud of the political achievements of Muslims in medieval India and believes that they more than satisfied modern ideas of tolerance, benevolence, and efficiency. He claims as Muslim anything which is done by a Muslim, whether or not strictly orthodox religious Muslims would regard it as so. In this, his approach is strongly communalist. The categories of European political science have clearly influenced the arrangement of the book into chapters headed: 'The Legal Sovereign', 'The Actual Sovereign', 'The Royal Household', 'The Ministers', 'Finance', 'The Army', 'Justice', 'Religious Affairs', 'Provincial and Local Government'. Dr. Qureshi treats the Delhi sultanate as a welfare state, the Muslim community in medieval India as a nation, and the sultans of Delhi as Muslims in both a religious and a political sense.

However, the Hindus were not ill-treated. 'The Hindu population was better off under the Muslims than under Hindu tributaries or independent rulers. . . . Nor was the Hindu despised socially. The Muslims, generally speaking, have always been remarkably free from racial prejudice. There are instances of Muslim nobles marrying Hindu maidens; of free intercourse between Muslim saints and Hindu yogis; of Hindu followers of Muslim saints and vice versa; . . . The Hindu was not branded with any social stigma; it was Hinduism which protected itself beneath the strong armour of exclusiveness. The Muslim was unclean; his very touch polluted the food of the twice-born Brahman and men of the higher castes; the newcomer was outside the pale. In fairness to Hinduism, it must be remembered that this treatment was not limited to the Muslim; but praise cannot be withheld from the conquering race before their tolerance in cheerfully submitting to this humiliation.'

C (i). Zahir ud-din Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times* (Bombay, 1935)

The author was a B.A. of Aligarh who wrote the work over a period of twenty years, away from libraries, after returning from qualifying in law in England. *Aurangzeb and His Times* was avowedly written as an apology for Aurangzīb and is mainly directed against Sir Jadunath Sarkar's interpretation in his *Life of Aurangzeb*. Mr. Faruki's main thesis is that Aurangzīb saved Islam in India from destruction after Akbar had surrendered its outer defences, but that in his treatment of the Hindus Aurangzīb was governed by political not religious considerations: for example, Aurangzīb destroyed temples and levied *jizya* in order merely to preserve Mughal domination. In any event it was not Aurangzīb who antagonized the Hindus, it was the Hindus who antagonized Aurangzīb. Mr. Faruki's apologetic is controlled by the categories of thought of the Aligarh school and of Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam*. 'If we compare the treatment of non-Muslims in Islamic countries with that of non-Aryans in India, the foreigners and non-citizens in Rome and non-Christians under European government, the balance of toleration, humanity and generosity will be found in favour of Islam.' He quotes H. G. Wells in his *Outline of History* to the effect that Islam prevailed because it was the best social and political order the times could offer. Mr. Faruki says, 'The basic principles are freedom and equality and anyone who endeavours to follow its laws in the right spirit cannot but be a just monarch.' Since Islam is freedom, justice and equality, Aurangzīb's policy cannot have caused the decline of the Mughal empire. Since it did decline then the causes must have been such other factors as the absence of a settled rule of succession and of an hereditary nobility, the inefficiency of and lack of control over the army. Mr. Faruki feels the tension between his Muslim and his Indian allegiances, but does not resolve it.

C (ii). S. M. Jaffar, *The Mughal Empire from Babur to Aurangzeb* (Peshawar, 1936). (For other works by Professor Jaffar, see p. 294 n.)

In his preface Professor Jaffar states that 'false history has done more than a mere wrong to the cause of national unity and intercommunal amity in India. A retrospective glance at the present state of affairs will not fail to reveal to the reader the fact that the teaching of wrong history, more than anything else, is responsible for the recurring riots among the different communities of India. Born and brought up in communal atmosphere we Indians see everything with communal glasses and therefore get a gloomy view. The obvious result is that the best of Muslim monarchs, statesmen and scholars have been painted in the darkest of colours and condemned as bigots and intolerants, nay, as bloodthirsty tyrants. As things stand at present, communal harmony without correct history is a dream which cannot be realised.'

The following propositions sum up Professor Jaffar's view of correct history: Akbar was a liberal-nationalist and progressive behind whose religious policy was zeal for Hindu-Muslim unity; Aurangzīb was an unwilling saviour of Islam in India in face of Hindu forwardness.

Akbar's Dīn-i-Ilāhī was 'so cleverly manipulated as to attract the entire population. . . . To a liberal Muslim it was Islam presented in a different form. To a Hindu, whose prominent ceremonies were incorporated, it was nothing short of Hinduism. To a Zoroastrian whose articles of sun worship and fire worship were included, it was nothing but their religion. Sunday was fixed as the day of initiation only to please the Christians. It was in a sense, a universal religion of India having enough to attract anyone to its originator. . . . The chief motive underlying the promulgation of the Divine Faith was the unification of India. To achieve this, it was necessary first to conquer and then to command sincere devotion from all and sundry by granting them the freedom of worship and the liberty of conscience.' The Dīn-i-Ilāhī was 'a political code, prepared by a politician and not a prophet'.

However, Professor Jaffar defends Akbar from the criticism that he was an apostate from Islam by saying that he was not really sincere in his Dīn-i-Ilāhī. 'In a land where the very word "Muslim" was an eyesore to the natives Akbar thought it expedient to subscribe to the beliefs of his Hindu subjects in spite of their hollowness. . . . Whereas, in fact, he always concealed his religious identity in byways and corners.' Akbar is stated to have forbidden the use of garlic and onions and the wearing of beads 'not because he was an apostate from Islam but because they were inconvenient in kissing. . . . Akbar was a Muslim, born as a Muslim, he lived as a Muslim, died as a Muslim and was succeeded by a Muslim.' Apparently Akbar managed to be both a nationalist and a Muslim by being neither sincerely. But whatever he did was remarkable compared to the deeds of royal contemporaries in Europe.

As for Aurangzīb, 'To those with whom Alamgir's bigotry has become a household word, it will come as a stunning surprise to learn that even at the height of their power the Mussalmans could not offer their Friday prayers in the Cathedral Mosque for full one year.' Charges of intolerance in the matter of temple destruction are answered by an appeal to the well-known principles of tolerance in Islam. 'The lot of the subjugated has never been happier than under the ruling races of Islam. . . . Alamgir was tolerant, and to a fairly high degree, but not so tolerant as Akbar and Dara who, in order to achieve their ulterior political aims, concealed their religious identities and even subscribed to the religion of the ruled. . . .' Alamgir would have continued the policy of his predecessors if the conditions had not changed. 'It must be remembered that it was only after he had discovered that it was impossible to reconcile the Rajputs to his rule that he refused to rely on them and rallied around him his own co-religionists, with whose help he succeeded in crushing his enemies and enforcing his authority as well as restoring law and order. When he unsheathed his sword for the protection of mosques and Muslim women, he became the Defender of the Faith, but when he carried the Crescent far and wide, he became the Champion of Islam—a title with which he is remembered to the present day.'

Professor Jaffar's *Mughal Empire* is a very clear example of an unresolved tension between Islam and Indian nationalism in some 'South Asian' Muslims in the nineteen-thirties. The author desires the best of both worlds and does not in his book relish having to make a choice between either. However, should the choice be obligatory (as I believe for Professor Jaffar it eventually became) there is evidence in this book that he would choose to be a Muslim first. 'Akbar . . . knew that Hinduism was nothing more than a set of ceremonies to which the Hindus clung so tenaciously; that other religions had little political importance, and that Islam alone, being superior to all others, could best serve his purpose. . . . Alamgir was a great king, doubly so from the standpoint of his co-religionists.' In the age of Mahatma Gandhi, Shivaji was described as 'the last constructive genius that Hindu India has produced'.

Meanwhile, following the school of Amīr 'Alī, Professor Jaffar praises Islam as democracy and progress. Whatever a Muslim does is right; if he cannot be praised, like Akbar as a nationalist, then he should be praised like Aurangzīb, as a saviour of Islam.

C (iii). Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* (London, 1936)

Originally a London doctoral thesis, this book is intended as an outline of the administrative machinery of the Mughal central government, principally under Akbar and his two successors. Dr. Ibn Hasan states that he has made no attempt to draw parallels between modern institutions and those of the Mughals, but he employs the terminology of western political science.

The main body of the work is preceded by an interesting analysis of the heritage of the Mughals from the period of the Delhi sultanate. Dr. Ibn Hasan attempts to show the influence of geography on medieval Indian policy, regarding Iltutmis̲h̲, Balban, 'Alā' al-dīn K̲h̲aljī, Fīrūz S̲h̲āh Tug̲h̲luq and Bahlūl Lōdī as essentially experimenters in political science tackling a single common problem of how to harmonize unity and diversity in one strong political structure. The western political assumptions of Ibn Hasan are revealed by the passage: 'The Muslims showed no unity among themselves. They never regarded the throne as a common heritage and never made common cause for its support. The people as a whole exhibited no national consciousness and gave no proof of national spirit at any stage or crisis.' Other interesting assumptions are implied in such statements as 'The *'ulamā* should not be condemned wholesale. They have passed their lives in a period of decline and decay and they were not free from the effects which the decline of kingdoms and the degeneration of nations generally produced on individuals. The whole of society exhibited the same signs in every branch of life and government.'

Each chapter is either a scrap-book of references to the duties of the various officers of the Mughal court or a study in the economy of a household, rather than a study in the working of political institutions. Dr. Ibn Hasan is not interested in deciding whether and if so in what sense the Mughal empire was a Muslim state but he states that Akbar and his successors strictly followed Islamic law in the greater part of the sphere of the judicature 'as was not done by them in any other part of the political structure of their empire'. The tone of the book as a whole is dispassionate and secular although the author clearly admires the Mughals. His detachment from the contemporary political scene may in part be explained by his position as a Reader in History at the Osmania University, Hyderabad, Deccan.

General Remarks

These remarks are also intended to apply to those works on medieval Muslim India by modern Muslim historians which have been excluded from more detailed discussion in this paper.

Modern Muslim historiography on medieval India, in English, is in its methods and in its concepts clearly not sired by Muslim historiography in India before Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan's day. It is a response to western thought, as mediated by the British, not a convolution within Muslim culture itself. It is imitative, not original. That is not, of course, to imply that the relation between western and modern Muslim historiography on medieval India is simply that of seal and wax impression. However, modern

Muslim historical writing has taken over the idea that history is a form of critical inquiry into the past from evidence and not merely a repetition of testimony and authority. It assumes that the object of history is to answer questions about human actions performed in the past. It employs the academic critical apparatus of footnotes, appendices, bibliography, and is clearly a very sophisticated form of activity.

Furthermore, the concepts of modern Muslim historiography are those of 'change', 'development', 'influence', 'evolution', of the organic unity of society, the historical explanation of whose 'growth' is couched in terms of a 'relationship' between 'religious', 'political', 'social', and 'economic' 'factors'. Broadly speaking (and always remembering Ibn K̲h̲aldūn), these are not the categories of thought of medieval Muslim historiography. (It is noteworthy that the majority of the authors under discussion have either been educated in England or have received a western-type education in South Asia.) The concepts I have mentioned are not to be found in the historical thinking of earlier Muslim historians or indeed in the attitudes of the Muslim community itself to its history. They are applied from outside, and recently.

Modern Muslim historiography on medieval India has been chiefly a form of Islamic apologetic, justifying the ways of medieval Muslims to the modern world and, in the process, commenting on the future of Muslims in South Asia as the authors see it. It will have been noticed that Muslim writing on medieval India tends to concentrate upon such figures as Akbar and Aurangzīb and upon the period when Islam made its first political impact upon South Asia. There is an urge to discuss such questions as whether Akbar stood for Hindu-Muslim unity, whether Aurangzīb was a communalist and if so whether he was governed by religious or political considerations and whether the Ghorid conquest of north India was 'a good thing' or 'a bad thing'. There is too the desire, not always of course conscious, to establish that whatever Muslims did in medieval India was right if not in terms of religion then in terms of politics.

Modern Muslim writing in English on medieval India is an expression of the Muslim urge in modern times either to accept terms from, or to come to terms with, or to impose terms upon, twentieth-century South Asia. With the possible exceptions of Ibn Hasan's and Abdul Aziz's work on the Mughals and Muhammad Bashir Ahmad's work on the administration of justice in medieval India, interest in the past is not really academic. The practical intentions of the historians are underlined by their interest more in the similarity than in the dissimilarity between past and present; in the search for uniformity rather than for the diversity in the human past. They tend to regard the past as valid and the interests of the people of the past as valid only in relation to the present. They award the 'verdicts of History'. They tend to assume the existence of eternal entities in human history, of which events are but the expressions—such entities as nation, class, autocracy, democracy, Hindu-Muslim antagonism, toleration and equality—regarding them almost as causative factors outside the historical process instead of as convenient linguistic descriptions of human behaviour. It may reasonably be alleged that, in practice, it is impossible to jump into the skins of other people of one's own time, still less of time past; the historians under discussion do not, in general, appear to make that aim even their ideal. What matters is where the history of South Asia is proceeding. What matters is to write a significant abridgement of the past which can be thrown at the heads of one's opponents, not an encyclopaedia of the past which cannot be thrown at anyone's head because it is so firmly and weightily anchored in its own milieu.

The modern Muslim historian of medieval India, writing in English, appears more interested in the politics than in the religion of the period, although one should make an exception of the work of Professor Habib on the mystics which has not been discussed because it appears in periodicals, and Dr. Faruqi's book on S̲h̲aik̲h̲ Aḥmad of Sarhind. One is bound to conclude that contemporary preoccupations with the political future of Muslims in South Asia and perhaps an unacknowledged desire to escape from this 'superstitious' religious phase of Muslim history in order to succeed in the modern world, have caused this neglect. The influence of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan and Amir 'Alī is still overwhelming among the English-educated Muslim intelligentsia. This school of thought is 'anti-historical' in the sense that it does not seek sympathetic insight into the religious experience of the medieval Muslim but rather a fighting re-interpretation of the Prophet's thought for today. Modern Muslim historians of medieval India today do not appear (to an outsider) to be men of deep personal religious experience.

It is perhaps impossible to sustain completely (on present evidence) the hypothesis that Muslim historical writing on medieval India is completely controlled by political considerations. It may be no mere coincidence, however, that works emphasizing the community of interests and the cultural intercourse of Hindus and Muslims tended to appear in the nineteen-twenties, that works emphasizing their polarity in religion and thought but suggesting that political co-operation had been and could be secured, tended to appear in the nineteen-thirties, and that works emphasizing the separate political achievements and destiny of the Muslims in South Asia tended to appear in the nineteen-forties. The situation of Aligarh today may also be not unconnected with the appearance there of Marxist interpretations of medieval history.

It is interesting to speculate—for I can attempt no more—whether any of the attitudes of medieval Muslim historiography have been carried over into modern Muslim historiography on medieval India. There appears to be the same intense consciousness of Islam as the unique, vital, final way of life and thought. There is the same inarticulate premiss that the writing of history should justify the ways of Muslims to men. There is the same assumption that history is purposive, teleological; there is the same urge towards a universal schematic view of history. May not the personification of 'the Muslim doctrine of equality and toleration' or 'the Quranic conception of God' as 'a revolutionary force of incalculable value for the attainment of human welfare' and their treatment as final causes in history be the consciousness of the sovereignty of God in modern dress? The significant feature of Professor Habib's Marxist interpretation of medieval Indian history is not that Marxism has absorbed Islam but that Islam has absorbed Marxism.

22. NOTES ON W. H. MORELAND AS HISTORIAN

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The historians of India have often been subjected to classification as Administrators, Missionaries, Nationalist Historians, and to grouping about the central attitudes towards the history of India which they reveal in their writings. Moreland's place is clear. In his Preface to *India at the Death of Akbar* he expresses his gratitude to the 'past and present members of my old Service (which, by the way, is sometimes said to have lost its interest in research)—Sir George Grierson, Sir Edward Maclagan, Mr. Vincent Smith, Mr. R. Sewell, Mr. M. Longworth Dames, Mr. R. Burn, Mr. A. C. Chatterjee, and Mr. A. Yusuf Ali'.[1]

This list—and it could be greatly extended—prompts the question why so many members of the I.C.S. were historians. Part of the answer lies in ambition—publication was useful to a career—part to the general effect of being brought face to face with another civilization and having to decide what to make of it, but the choice of history as the medium seems to me to be dictated by one aspect of government service in particular—revenue administration at the district level. The 'groping for information' began there, and from the first compelled attention to the history of the institutions which were found. Every successive advance to a new area called out a renewal of the inquiry, as did the long controversy over Permanent Settlement and Ryotwarī, which was revived by the resolutions of the early Indian National Congress in favour of the former. Few revenue officers escaped a study of past Settlement Reports, while those who took part in revisions of settlements had to look for and explain change, and in the Record of Rights and of Village Customs they were officially required to be antiquarians. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century there was a steady stream of publications of selections from the revenue records, of Manuals and Settlement Reports and of District Gazetteers, each with its historical sections. The Assistant-Collector and the Judge, J. H. Nelson, was not alone in being 'forced to become an historian and an amateur sociologist'—the line stretches unbroken from James Grant, the authors of the Fifth Report, Briggs, Lionel Place, H. H. Wilson, to Vincent Smith and Moreland. Service in the revenue line made historians.

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[1] William Harrison Moreland. Born in Northern Ireland 1868. Educated at Clifton College, and as a probationer at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took a first in law.

Appointed to district work as assistant settlement officer at Unao. On the settlement officer's death, completed the assessment and published an admirable report (1896).

Appointed Director of Land Records and Agriculture, U.P. Responsible for revision of record of rights procedure; for the training of qanungos; formed the first agricultural college at Cawnpore. C.I.E. 1905.

1907–8 Received a special commendation for his work in the famine of that year.
1912 Visited Australia to select rust-resistant wheats. C.S.I.
1914 Retired from the I.C.S.
1914–16 Agricultural adviser in Central India.
1916 Returned to England. 1938 died.

Moreland's career is thus typical, and after a first volume on *The Agriculture of the United Provinces* (1904), his advance towards being a historian was unbroken (fortuitously aided of course by increasing deafness which stopped the advance from Director of Land Records and Agriculture in the U.P., for which he seemed destined, and led to his early retirement). In his second volume, *The Revenue Administration of the United Provinces* (1911), the metamorphosis was well under way, the grub which had fed full on Settlement Reports and the masterly historical Introduction to the Oudh Gazetteer is bursting from the chrysalis, the wings which later soared over Mughal India are already visible.

The book had a strictly practical purpose, to give junior officers a grasp of the whole system, and the history was used, as Smith said it should be used, so as to illuminate the present by the past, 'In order to obtain a clear view of the revenue administration, the first great essential is to realise that it is a gradual development. The land revenue was not imposed by the English, nor by her forerunners, the Mughals: the principle that the cultivator of the soil should provide for the greater part of the expenses of Government seems to have been followed in India from the earliest times . . .' But the practical purpose was not all. A knowledge of history might help in handling landowners, according as they were truly chiefs or merely jumped-up revenue farmers, and officers worried by the cultivators' subterfuges might be more philosophical when they realized that they were survivals of centuries when concealment was vital. But the discussions of the Mughal bīgha, of baṭāī or kankūt, are included because of their historical interest, the plea for research on Hindu administration is disinterested, and the present is as often used to illuminate the past, as past the present. The great weight of historical matter, the historical approach to every institution is there because Moreland is already an historian.

As an historian he does not share the discontinuous view which has been noted in many British writers on Indian history, and for two reasons. The more important springs from his view that British administration 'has followed necessarily from the revenue-system indigenous to the country, and adopted first by the Mohammedans and then by the English Empire, with only such changes as were necessary to fit it to the changing political and economic circumstances of the country'. The second, and more surprising, follows from the view that India, basically, has been so far unaffected by the West: 'the country is only gradually coming on to a cash basis: rents are still in places paid in kind; the payment of wages in grain was recently almost universal and is still common; salt and other necessaries are still occasionally obtained by barter, and speaking more generally, the rupee as a coin had until recently in the country some value as a rarity in addition to what it was worth in the great commerce of the cities. . . . There has hardly been time for the people to get accustomed to capital as a growing and mobile factor of production.'

Both these reasons have their origin in an even more fundamental belief on the primacy of economic forces in history. This finds open expression in his dismissal of the Mohammedan annalists who 'deal only with the externals of history—dynasties, war, and rebellions', but it is implicit throughout. And this in turn doubtless derives from his service on the revenue side, which makes him relegate other government departments to the position of auxiliaries, and declare 'in India the Government . . . is directly interested in the success of the agricultural industry. The well-known aphorism, "Pauvres paysans, pauvre royaume" is strictly and literally true in India today just as it was true of the Hindu states depicted by Manu.'

Economic forces are at the heart of history, and in India agriculture, and the revenue derived from it, is the major economic factor. This view, formed at least as early as 1904, provides the constant thread through all Moreland's subsequent writings.

He sees the pattern of British rule in India dictated by the revenue-systems found in India, and the political structure Hindu or Muslim dictated by the brute facts of physical environment and practical necessities. The ultimate problem is the collection and utilization by the State of a share of the harvest, in a land where transport was always difficult. Where revenue is taken in kind only states of small or moderate size are possible, and for this reason local rajas survived the many Hindu empires, and in some cases through the Mohammedan period. The village community under its Lambordar was allowed to remain, and is kept in being, because neither the Mughals nor the British could hope to collect the individual dues of the peasant punctually and correctly. The forms of administration, of the bureaucracies which he finds everywhere, are imposed by the practical necessities of Indian agriculture—the difficulty of dividing the crop over large areas with the crops ripening simultaneously compel Sher Shah and Akbar to adopt measurement as their principle of assessment, and all else follows. 'Akbar's statement of the revenue then was based . . . on a wide foundation of ascertained fact, and thus resembles the later settlements effected under British rule. In some details, too, it is curiously modern, or it is more correct to say that various administrative needs were already appreciated to a surprising extent. Thus there were elaborate rules for encouraging the extension of cultivation, and instructions were issued for the protection and assistance of cultivators: the following extracts showing the spirit in which revenue officers were expected to approach their duties are by no means out of date.'

He thus ignores, as unimportant, most of the problems which exercised other historians of the day—the effect of caste, or of despotism upon India's political development, the reasons, divine or otherwise, for British ascendancy. In so far as he sees a distinct role for the British, except as improved administrators (whose past mistakes he does not attempt to hide), it is as the impersonal agents of economic change. He rejects any idea that this change can be legislated for—tenancy legislation has been a failure creating as many evils as it has cured, 'the ineffectiveness of usury laws is a commonplace of political philosophy', and the reason is that laws do not change the economic forces: 'the economic forces that have to be allowed for work slowly, while the adaptations in the social relations of different classes are effected more slowly still'. It is the introduction of a money economy and the free, productive use of capital, and the rise in wages which follows from greater trade and production, that will destroy an organization of agriculture based on cheap labour and the almost gratuitous services of the lower castes in the village.

Moreland's next book was his *Introduction to Economics for Indian Students*, published in 1913, now looking very elementary and old-fashioned with its omission of any discussion of liquidity, inflation, preference, and indifference, and the whole concept of imperfect competition. It is, however, sound, and written with great definition of terms. It is of interest because it gives a hint about Moreland's personal views on the aim of government, which came out more strongly in *India at the Death of Akbar*. His concluding chapter, on the National Income, ends with a discussion of the weakness of the system of Industrial Freedom, points out the alternative, the regulation of the production, consumption, and distribution of wealth by the nation as a whole, and commends the ideas 'described in general terms as Communism or Socialism' as a subject for study. In his earlier work he had seen State-socialism, organizing the supply of capital to agriculture, as a necessary instrument in advance, in his next he attacks the Mughal system for its maldistribution of wealth, 'because a nearer approach to equality will usually yield a greater aggregate of satisfaction', and in a final statement of his views holds that distribution has improved, but must go further, while the lesson for modern statesmen and administrators is the paramount need for largely increasing the national dividend. These are always Moreland's standards of judgement of the ordering of society: does it distribute wealth evenly, and does it encourage production.

In his *Revenue Administration*, however, judgements are scarcely made.

Explanations are offered with a tolerant eye for human weaknesses which leads to one shrewd thrust at the vision of the ideal Aryan village community, but no moral judgements. And the same pragmatic approach leads him to dismiss the current technical controversies over land-revenues as tax or rent, and the conflict between the 'hardy yeomanry' and 'enlightened landowner' schools. Only once do politics intrude, in an aside which juts out from the historical narrative: 'the revenue now assessed represents a proportion of substantially less than 10 per cent of the produce of the land—curiously, just about what was thought reasonable at the time when Manu wrote, and about one-third of what was considered proper by Akbar'. Here is an echo of R. C. Dutt's attack on over-assessment in 1900, and of the reply of 1902, in *Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government*, to which, for the United Provinces chapter, Moreland doubtless made a contribution.

Moreland's next important contribution was a detailed study, with Yusuf Ali, of *Akbar's Land-Revenue System*, published in 1918,[2] and then in 1920, *India at the Death of Akbar*, which was published after his retirement from the I.C.S. and his return to England. Moreland had always written with Indian readers in mind: his *Economics* was for Indian students, *India at the Death of Akbar* was offered as a basis for further research by the schools of economics growing up in the Indian Universities, and 'the young men of the educated classes who look forward to an increased share in the government of the country'. But in 1920, though he is still pursuing his earlier interests, there is an astonishing change of tone and intention. Historical research is overlaid by political polemic. He writes to assist those who knew pre-war India 'to see the past more nearly in its true perspective'; every chapter is a refutation of some charge against the British administration in India.

Some of the points are made indirectly: 'Akbar's court was essentially foreign, and even in his later years the Indian element, whether Hindu or Moslem, contributed only a small proportion of the party, whose tastes and habits led to the patronage of foreign merchants and the use of foreign commodities', but most very directly: 'the higher ranks of the Imperial Service were remunerated on a scale far more liberal than that which now prevails in India' (pp. 68–69); 'The armies were in the aggregate certainly much more numerous than those now maintained, but the men were wasted for lack of organization and training' (p. 93); on disposal of crops—'the buyers for export houses, who have made things distinctly better for the peasant, had not come into existence' (p. 126); on the level of revenue-demand, 'no modern Settlement Officer would think for a moment of framing his assessment on any such basis' (p. 132); 'In the matter of industry India was more advanced relatively to Western Europe than she is today'—but that 'is an entirely different thing from saying that the income she derives from industries has decreased . . .' (p. 156); 'the economic position of the bulk of artisans was at least as bad as at the present day' (p. 188); and so to his main point, and conclusion, 'What qualities were brought out among the successful officers by the system? . . . Could it be counted on to produce administrators who would have the good of the people at heart, or did it tend to equip the country with exploiters rather than cherishers of the poor? . . . the verdict must I think be unfavourable' (p. 72), and 'Contact with this root-evil was established (by the British) only through the political changes of the eighteenth century, and thenceforward the main interest of Indian economic history lies in the gradual transition from the régime of exploitation, through indifference, to conscious effort for improvement' (p. 300).

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[2] 'Akbar's land-revenue system as described in the "Ain-i-Akbari"'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1918, pp. 1–42.

For every one of his comments there is an appropriate Congress resolution—on Indianization of the services, on reduction in salaries or army estimates, against the export of food grains and the level of the revenue demand, against an imposed free-trade policy and economic colonialism, with its attendant destruction of Indian handicrafts—which he is answering. (Doubtless writings by nationalist historians were also his target, though N. L. Law's *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule* is the only work specifically mentioned.) So agitation against the enhancement of the salt tax brings the rejoinder that in Mughal times salt was much dearer, and the Swadeshi cry for self-sufficiency meets with the comment that when India lived on her own resources her people were ill-fed and badly clothed. Urdu translations of this, and of *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*[3] were made for Osmania University. A comment (freely translated) by the editor sums up Indian reaction to this Moreland: 'In spite of all these merits, from a perusal of his books, and especially the final chapters of the present book, it is clear that one object of the learned author in writing these books is to prove the Indian Governments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries A.D. to have been the worst example of oppression and exploitation and tyranny, and, so to speak, to say in reply to those who at the present time present the exploitation of the British Government as the cause of the poverty and wretched condition of the people of India, that in the period of the Mughal kings the financial and social condition of the people of India was even worse and more deplorable than it is today.

'This may please in England, but must rouse anger in India—an Indian work should refute the charges, and the teachers of the university must meanwhile point out these falsities to their students.'

Three years later Moreland published *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*. In this preface there is no declaration of a propagandist aim, but a communication of his excitement at the discovery of the importance of Dutch activities in India, and of Dutch sources. Moreland, recovered from, perhaps slightly ashamed of, the vigour of his defence—unrewarded by Government—of his old Service, is rather on the defensive. He is at pains to show that his picture of India in 1605 was warranted, and is confirmed by the new materials now used, and at one point comes out with 'I estimate the various Indian administrations strictly from the economist's standpoint . . . readers who may think that the description of Indian administrations is too unfavourable to represent the truth may be advised to examine for themselves the position.' He is at pains, too, to make a favourable comment —on the Hindu merchants' probity and skill, on Akbar's high administrative abilities—where he can. Finally, he feels obliged to defend European activities in India. If American indigo and British cottons displaced the Indian products the fault lay in a practice of adulteration which the Mughals could not eradicate and the lack of quality standardization inherent in artisan production. Extra-territorial rights were granted to Europeans (and not extorted by them) just as they were to the Arabs at Calicut or the Chinese at Malacca; the first Dutch fort in India was pressed upon them by the local Nayak. 'We hear nothing at this period of Indians going to Europe to push their goods, or pressing sample consignments on the foreign buyers; in this case the buyers did the work and it followed necessarily that the large profits accruing from transportation were not shared by India.'

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[3] *Akbar to Aurangzeb*, translated into Urdu by Saiyid Ḥāshim (Hyderabad, 1931).

The Agrarian System of Moslem India, which appeared in 1929, is free from political warfare, invidious comparisons, and any overt casting of moral balances. But Moreland's whole argument leads to the conclusion that physical and economic causes drove Moslem India into a dead end: 'This was the *damnosa haereditas*, the legacy of loss, which Moslem administration left to their successors, and which is still far from liquidation.' From that dead end the British were rescuing Indian society, for long, with the more important Dutch, as impersonal forces of economic change, but latterly with a conscious administrative philanthropy.

There remains for consideration the slighter work, *A Short History of India* (1936), published when Moreland was sixty-eight, in collaboration with Sir Atul Chatterjee. It is expressly a work of popularization, in particular of Moreland's own studies, and the share taken by the two authors is not defined. It is not possible to disentangle positive statements of view by Moreland from the text. A few general points can, however, be made. The aim of the work is to describe the evolution of Indian culture and its reactions to foreign, noticeably British, contacts, not to recount the British achievement. In the first section, on Hindu India, the authors follow Smith in rejecting claims of European origins for Indian science, thought, and arts. In the second the most striking feature is the grim picture of eighteenth-century India, torn by faction, economically ruined, degraded in culture and religion, at the moment when power passed into European hands. In the third the almost uniform praise for British motives, and scarcely more qualified praise of British achievements. Thus there are no moral qualms about Hastings' methods, Wellesley's dealings with Mysore and Arcot are presented as fully justified: nothing is said about the Indian point of view there or in Oudh. Auckland and Ellenborough were unfortunate, the Amirs of Sind drew confiscation upon themselves. All Englishmen were made to share, from the earliest period, in the Haileybury tradition, 'a high standard of personal conduct, a sense of the magnitude of the tasks ahead, an ideal of loyal service to India as well as England'. This is not original work, but the selection from other people's work is very revealing. A *Journal of Indian History* review of *The Agrarian System* includes one comment, to my mind misapplied and off the point, which would have been very proper in a review of *The Short History*: 'This and other points of comparison with the British agrarian system, favourable of course to the latter, are the unconscious outcome of the Civil Service temperament and tradition, strongly characteristic of one type of Anglo-Indian historian.'

All this should not, however, obscure the fact that Moreland was a true historian, even if an official purpose first made him one, and the political feelings for a while dominated him. He did not learn Persian, Portuguese, and Dutch so as to arm himself for polemics. He had his own coherent view of the mainsprings of human activity in the past, and a scholar's devotion to research. The Introduction to his first book ends with an appeal for more work on Hindu inscriptions and land grants; in his last he writes, 'I cannot now take an active part in the search for such documents, but I must not let pass this opportunity of appealing to the local historical societies and similar bodies at work in India, to grapple with this question in earnest.'

His contribution to methodology, perhaps derived from his study of economics, is to be found in his insistence upon the close definition of terms, especially in translation. In his *Revenue Administration* a glossary precedes the text, and room is found even in the *Short History* for another. He repeatedly stresses the danger of using translations not checked against the whole context, such as those of Blochmann or Dowson which import foreign 'terms of art' and so obscure the changes in meaning which technical terms undergo by the passage of time or extension in area. He expounds his method of linguistic analysis in *The Agrarian System of Moslem India*, and in the appendices to his major works provides learned examples of his technique. In four books his first sentence includes a definition.

His vision was narrowed by his Civil Service training and his economist's concentration on the production and distribution of wealth. So Barni is introduced as being 'of administrative stock' and 'interested in agrarian matters'. 'Barni does not tell us what position he himself occupied, so probably he never rose very high; but in one passage he speaks of having been employed at headquarters for more than seventeen years.' Bāyazīd is 'an old collector', Badā'ūnī 'had not received the preferment to be expected'. In like manner Mughal architecture is allowed to be an artistic achievement, but unproductive: the Red Fort or Tāj Maḥal are just examples of that conspicuous consumption to which Mughal society was, by its structure, unhappily committed. Yet his experience and interests also made his vision, within its limits, remarkably penetrating and acute. His analysis of the Mughal land-revenue system, and its conditioning factors, is masterly.

His work on administration has been fruitful, and has inspired numerous scholars. His interest in the Dutch records began some time after 1920, probably after seeing Terpstra's *Opkomst der Wester-Kwartieren* which, though published in 1918, does not appear in the bibliography of *India at the Death of Akbar*.[4] It led to a first-rate exposition of Dutch commercial policy on the East, and of their activities in India. But as yet it has had comparatively little effect upon Indian historical studies.

As for his own personal view, of the primacy of economic forces in history, I doubt if it has found acceptance by any historian of medieval India. True, particular points, such as his analysis of 'Alā-al-dīn's control of prices, have been taken over, but in the *Cambridge History*, administrative and economic matters are popped in as an afterthought. Even in Edwardes and Garratt's excellent *Mughal Rule in India* biography and political narrative are kept separate from administrative and economic analysis. There is a physical mixture, not a chemical interaction. Moreland's explanation of administrative structure in terms of physical limitation and economic need, and of political collapse from an economic parasitism which destroyed productive energies, has not been followed up, nor improved upon.

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[4] He wrote, translated or edited the following: Florisze (P.), *Peter Floris, his voyage to the East Indies in the Globe, 1611–15* (Hakluyt Soc., 2nd Ser., no. LXXIV), 1934; *Relations of Golconda in the early seventeenth century* (Hakluyt Soc., 2nd Ser., no. LXVI), 1931; Pelsaert (F.), *Jahangir's India. The Remonstratie of Francisco Pelsaert.* Trans. by W. H. Moreland and P. Geyl (Cambridge, 1925); 'Dutch sources for Indian History: 1590 to 1650', *Journal of Indian History*, ii, 1922–3, pp. 222–32; 'Pieter Van Den Broeke at Surat (1620–29)', ibid., xi, 1932, pp. 1–16, 203–18; 'From Gujarat to Golconda in the Reign of Jahangir', ibid., xvii, 1938, pp. 135–50.

23. MODERN MUSLIM HISTORICAL WRITING IN ENGLISH

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I wonder if I may be permitted to begin with a quotation that might at first seem irrelevant to our topic. For it is the remark not of an historian but of a political leader, and appears not in a learned monograph but in a collection of popular speeches delivered to a foreign audience and published abroad. Yet I have chosen it to illustrate two or three things that seem to me significant, even profound. The following sentence of the late Mr. Liyāqat 'Alī Khāṇ, while Prime Minister of Pakistan, was proffered at Town Hall, New York, and before the National Conference of Canadian Universities meeting in Kingston: 'The question that we should all ask ourselves is: can Pakistan make up for the lost centuries of technological advance and industrial development sufficiently quickly to give weight and substance to its contribution to world peace?' (Liyāqat 'Alī: *Pakistan, the Heart of Asia* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 84, 134.)

This is a quite straightforward remark; hardly, it would seem, striking enough to be deserving of special comment. Yet for one thing it illustrates a major shift in Muslim historical consciousness from, say, two centuries ago. The conceptions employed are very different indeed from those of the medieval chroniclers. There is an easy naturalness in thinking in terms of a broad sweep of time and space; there is evidence of a concept of evolutionary progress ('advance', 'development'), and the striking idea of one country's being some centuries behind another in a world-wide process of technical and economic transformation. It treats the question of peace and war, and of the country's effectiveness for peace (itself an interesting criterion of historical significance), as depending not on fate or any transcendent or outside factor, or on individual personality (of a ruler or the like), but, it is implied, on the speed with which a large-scale group can so act as radically to alter its internal social and economic form. Clearly, we have moved a long way from the historical thinking of men such as Baranī or his quite late successors!

I have said that this remark is typical, not outstanding. It was not put forward by its author, and I am not putting it forward here, as a creative historical insight, a striking intellectual innovation. On the contrary, its significance for our purposes lies precisely in the point that it quietly represents an orientation widely accepted amongst the intelligentsia of the community. Such ideas are taken for granted; not perhaps by a Mawdūdī but by most of the educated. Yet not only is it not the work of a professional historian. More: it is not derived from the work of the community's professional historians. This sort of interpretation of or approach to the modern history of the Muslims comes from some other source.

The second fundamental point, then, illustrated by this quotation, is that the modern Indo-Muslim idea of history finds its chief expression not deliberately in historiography but incidentally. Although many Indo-Muslims would read such a passage and hardly stop to notice it, so naturally would they agree, yet no Indo-Muslim has written a book in which this kind of analysis of the historical development of his community is elaborated.

In this, they resemble, for instance, Canadians; who also are a people who in this field have absorbed more than they have created, who read much more history than they write. An analysis of the writing of history by Englishmen would give probably a fair representation of Englishmen's sense of history; but this would not at all be true of either Canada or Pakistan.

There is more to the situation, however, than a susceptibility to outside influence. It is not only that the Indo-Muslim intelligentsia live in a world of ideas that transcends their own intellectual output. This in itself is perhaps a sign of strength. The problem is rather that this world of ideas has in their case been able to find but little expression, or even re-expression, in a sustained self-analysis. New ideas of history are accepted; but are hardly applied, except in passing, to the history of one's own group.

If I may take another example: on the opening page of the Introduction to a recent Pakistan Government publication on the Muslim movement 1857–1947 (see note 41), there is a reference to the decline of Muslim power in India after the Mughals, and this sentence occurs regarding the reformer Sayyid Aḥmad Khāṇ: 'To use Mr. Toynbee's terminology, he saw the salvation of his nation in seeking the "Herodian" solution and in discarding the "Zealot" one.' The author of this Introduction is not named, but I would guess that it is the Civil Service officer responsible for the production. He moves in a circle where such allusions would be readily understood—but little elaborated.

Moreover, this is true not only among the Westernizers. Over against this, one may take a comparable example from the Islamic side. A poem such as Iqbāl's *Ṣiqilliyah* in Urdū expresses the community's widely prevalent and indeed utterly crucial sense, nostalgic and desperate, of the loss of erstwhile Muslim power and splendour. This feeling is quite fundamental to any understanding of modern Indo-Muslim affairs. Yet no Indo-Muslim historian has undertaken to trace or examine that loss of power, to analyse its course.

In fact, an investigation of writing by Indo-Muslims on the modern historical field shows rather quickly that even of what has been actively produced, the share of academic historians is small. To be precise, so far as I have been able to discover, with the one exception of Sir Shafā'at Aḥmad Khāṇ (of whom more below), the Indo-Muslim contribution to modern Indian historiography has been by other men: I.C.S. officers (Yūsuf 'Alī, Ikrām), lawyers, journalists, etc. The amateur has quite outpaced the professional.

To put this point in another way, probably more perceptive: an examination of the historiographical output in English of this community suggests that those who have received a Westernizing education (chiefly in Britain) in specifically Western subjects (those who read Modern Greats at Oxford, who studied Law or Education, or took an Honours degree in English, (Western) History, etc.) seem to have been intellectually stimulated much more effectively than those whose formal training was in Oriental History. So far as the Ph.D. degree in this latter field is concerned, it is striking how few recipients have published a second work besides their thesis. In Urdū, even a cursory survey shows that literary interest and literary history have proven vastly more stimulating and creative than academic history. Studies of Ghālib, Ḥālī, Shiblī, Akbar Ilāhābādī, have been more numerous and each has sold more copies, gone through more editions, than studies in any other aspect of nineteenth-century Indo-Muslim development. On both sides, political interest has of late elicited study that scholarly interest has failed to evoke. In both English and Urdū, it is not the historian who expresses the community's sense of history.

The matter may perhaps be summarized thus: that the imagination of modern Indo-Muslims in the field of their recent history has been caught to a point of productive writing, chiefly by their own heritage in its literary aspects, by Westernism in its internal-cultural aspects, and recently by indigenous politics. The indigenous literary tradition has maintained, and developed, a vigorous vitality. Otherwise, a synthesis between one's own tradition and the stimulus of modernity, that would give rise to a creative modernism, has in the field of historiography as in other fields yet to be satisfactorily attained.

There is nothing new in noting that the absence of this synthesis is itself one of the most significant factors in the contemporary Indo-Muslim situation—lying close to the heart of its day-to-day life. The tension is so acute and the consequent inhibitions so influential, in personal, social, and national development, that one must try to see any isolated phenomenon as an aspect of the whole. Only so can it be understood.

Accordingly, the topic of our present study, if it were to be adequate at all, should rightly be: 'The growth of historical consciousness among the Muslims of India (and, since 1947, Pakistan) in recent times.' This, I am convinced, is an important, coherent, and highly meaningful subject, that would richly reward study. It might be urged that the heading should rather be reduced so as to read: 'The growth of a consciousness of Indian history among the Muslims . . .' But this is itself a highly crucial question —raising, perhaps cavalierly, distinctions of much more than academic interest. For one of the most considerable facts in the history of the subcontinent during the past century is precisely the degree to which the growing historical consciousness of the Muslim community in India has been a consciousness of Islamic rather than of Indian history.

One might make a case that the first milestone in the growth of modern historical consciousness among Indian Muslims is the publication of Ḥālī's *Musaddas* (1879). This monumental and eloquent work, in edition after edition, permeated deeply into the community's heart and spirit. (Again, we must note that it is not historiography in the strict sense at all; yet surely to ignore it would be folly.) Yet, as I have elsewhere noted (Smith, 'Modern Turkey: Islamic Reformation?', in *Islamic Culture* (Ḥaydarābād), vol. xxv, 1952), the past glory that this poem so powerfully conjures up is of an Islamic community that is remote; only one of the men mentioned, Naṣīru-d-Dīn Ṭūsī, lived even part of his life this side of the fall of Baghdād (1258); and none of them was indigenously Indian. Further: of 'Abdu-l-Ḥalīm Sharar's historical novels, again a contribution of major significance, most deal with Spain, the Arab Near East, and Iran; three or four only have scenes laid in (Muslim) India. This tendency is notable also with Shiblī, the founder of Urdū biography. He wrote a life of Aurangzeb, over against half-a-dozen or so on classical Near Easterners; a proportion which his continuingly productive Nadwah and Dāru-l-Muṣannifīn have not seriously disturbed. We have mentioned Iqbal's poem *Ṣiqilliyah*; one might, perhaps must, add his *Shikwah* and *Masjid-i-Qurtubah*. The growing historical consciousness of the Muslims of India has been a growing awareness of their *Islamic* past.

The Indian Muslim is both Indian and Muslim. The existence of this duality, and the endeavour to stress either one or the other fact rather than both, have proven, shall we say, explosive. There has been a failure to intellectualize the duality, to hold the two poles synthetically in creative tension. This failure is too stark for this conference too to fall into it lightly. Whether the Muslims of India and their activities constitute a chapter in Islamic history or in Indian history is a question that has split the soul and body of the community; and is still today unsatisfactorily answered.

One may profitably contrast two recent attempts at answer: on the Pakistan side Aḥmad 'Ali's *Culture of Pakistan* (appendix, pp. 195–216, of: Symonds, Richard, *The Making of Pakistan* (Faber, London, 1950)), and on the Indian, Humāyūṇ Kabīr's *Indian Heritage* (note 9) and 'Ābid Ḥusayn's *National Culture of India* (note 10). These are roughly comparable in scope and seriousness of purpose; though not in size or perhaps quality. Each takes the long view, dealing in millennia, and the cultural view, dealing in values and ideas and their historical outworking. The first flees from Indian-ness, and would extraterritorialize even Mohenjodaro (linking the ancient Indus-valley civilization with Sumer and Elam) as well as the Tāj ('Yet though left in India, the monuments and buildings of Agra and Delhi are entirely outside the "Indian" tradition and are an essential heritage and part of Pakistani culture'—p. 205), and omits from consideration altogether quite major matters less easily disposed of (such as Aśoka's reign, and the whole of East Pakistan). The other two, on the other hand, seek for the meaning of Muslim culture within the complex of Indian 'unity in diversity' as an integral component.

The two tendencies, the two historiographies, if you will, have perhaps since 1947 been given a territorial differentiation. But this is an over-simplification; and again it seems fair to say that a consciousness of Indo-Muslim history in a rigorous and deep sense has yet to be realistically formed, let alone formulated.

There has even been some writing by Muslims on the Hindū period of Indian history (a little by Sayyid 'Alī Bilgrāmī, oddly enough, who otherwise was entranced by Le Bon's romanticism on the Arabs; and chiefly by Ghulām Yazdānī; one work by Mujīb). This is not in itself of major significance, probably; again because the consciousness among Muslims of ancient Indian history is not to be measured primarily by Muslim writing directly on the subject. Inquiry here might rather investigate, perhaps, references to that history in other writing by Muslims. Allāh Bakhsh Rājpūt, to give one quite minor and rather amusing example, in his *India's Struggle* (note 38), romantically depicts a call in Mohenjodaro to rise against an invader as the first sounding in India of 'the trumpet of liberty . . . 5000 years ago' (p. 18). More important, of course, for the ingrained disdain which is normal, is the absence of references.

'The growth of historical consciousness among the Muslims of India in recent times', then, I proffer as a topic for investigation. However, it is a large topic—beyond the capacity of this present paper. I have begun to collect data for it, but it proves too large. Presumably a professor's reach must exceed his grasp, or what are his Ph.D. students for? I should like to induce an interested graduate to take it on. In the meantime, fenced in by the limitations of space, time, and air travel, I may erect bounds within which something may at once be possible. Let us define our sub-topic here, then (especially since Urdū historiography is already a conference topic), as 'Writing in English by Indian and Pakistani Muslims on the modern period of Indian (and Pakistani) history.' By 'modern' we may understand the British and post-British periods; omitting on the one hand Āwadh, as a late aftermath of the old, and including, on the other hand, Walīyullāh and his movement, as an early precursor of the new. It is necessary to limit consideration further to published books; omitting articles and also typescripts (unpublished theses, etc.). We also omit school text-books.

Within these limits, it is possible to analyse the titles that I have been able to find into categories as follows. As usual, the classifications are not rigorous and inevitably overlap.

1. *Academic History*[1]

If one begins with strict academic historiography, in the sense of productive research that uncovers original data and marshals them critically and inductively, the one Muslim historian writing on the modern period seems to be Sir Shafā'at Aḥmad Khāṇ. His interest was in the British penetration of the country. His books are:

(1) *The East India trade in the XVIIth century in its political and economic aspects* (London, 1923).*
(2) *Sources for the history of British India in the seventeenth century* (London, 1926).*
(3) *John Marshall in India: notes and observations in Bengal, 1668–1672*; ed. and arranged under subjects by S. A. Khan (Allahabad University Studies in History, vol. 5, London, 1927).*
(4) *History and Historians of British India* (Allahabad, 1939).*

One may perhaps add:

(5) *Anglo-Portuguese negotiations relating to Bombay, 1666–1677. Journal of Indian History*, vol. 1, 1921–22, pp. 419–570. Separately published in 1923 as vol. 3 of the Allahabad University Studies in History.*

An early writer, not professionally academic, but writing as British historians of that time were wont to do in their treatment of Indian history, from the point of view of administration, is:

(6) Laṭīf, Sayyid Muḥammad, *History of the Panjab, from the remotest antiquity to the present time* (by) Syad Muhammad Latif (Calcutta Central Press Co., Calcutta, 1891).

The author treats the Sikh Wars and so on just as a British official; and even makes use of Latin tags.

Another form of original historiography is the interpretative, which uses already known material but draws new conclusions from it. Considering the aridity and unsympathetic, unsynthetic quality of most British historians of India, this can be considered at least equally important. We may mention in this connection

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[1] Titles marked with an asterisk are from library catalogue entries only; I have not had an opportunity to handle the books.

(7) A. Yūsuf 'Alī, *The Making of India. A brief history of the different elements, geographical, ethnical, material, moral and political, that went to the building up of the Indian people. With an account of the foundation, consolidation, and progress of British rule in India.* By A. Yūsuf 'Alī (A. & C. Black, London, 1925).

This does not deal exclusively or even primarily with the modern period, but we feel justified in including it because it does treat that period extensively, and was a pioneering work—not only for a Muslim, but indeed for anybody. The opening section of the Preface (page v) bears quoting:

> 'The new spirit that has recently affected the writing, teaching, and study of history has been applied very little yet to Indian history. . . . I look upon history as a whole, and not in water-tight compartments. I have tried . . . to relate Indian facts to . . . events . . . outside India. . . . Military and political history has not been ignored . . . but in our age-long history they are really very subordinate factors, and have been treated as such. Social, economic, and religious movements . . . have been given what I consider due prominence.'

It is perhaps interesting to note further that in his list of seventy-four books 'for further study', the author gives no work by a modern Muslim except for the life of the prophet (Amīr 'Alī).

The same writer's earlier volume may also be listed:

(8) *Life and Labour of the People of India* (London, 1907).*

Twenty or thirty years later come the two works on Indian history on whose Muslim significance we have already remarked, and whose orientation to India as an historical entity is in line with that established by Yūsuf 'Alī:

(9) Humāyūṇ Kabīr, *The Indian Heritage* (Bombay, Calcutta: Asia Publishing House; third edition, revised and enlarged, 1955). (The first edition was 1946, under the title *Our Heritage*; there was a second edition in 1947; it was apparently published also in London ('India printed') in 1947 under the title *India's Heritage*. The second edition was reprinted in 1949.)

(10) 'Ābid Ḥusayn, *National Culture of India* (Jaico Books, Bombay, etc., 1956). (This is an abridged and considerably revised edition of a work originally (1946?) published in Urdū, in 3 volumes, *Hindūstānī Qawmīyat*. An Urdū version of the revision also appeared simultaneously in 1956.)

Of the following essay I have not been able to ascertain anything but the title:

(11) 'Abid Ḥasan, *Der Islam in Indien. Indien im Weltislam* (Heidelberg: Mylan, 1943).

Along with Sir Shafā'at Aḥmad, as research historiography, and this one dealing with the history of the Muslim community, one might wish to list the following significant item in our survey—depending on whether one considered its subject as within 'modern' history, or as the last stage of medieval:

(12) Muḥibbu-l-Ḥasan Khān, *History of Tipu Sultan* (Calcutta, 1951).

In any case, this brings us to our next section.

2. *Biography*

In line with the standard British practice of viewing Indian history in terms of the lives of its individual rulers, we find

(13) Sayyid Sardār 'Alī Khāṇ, *The Life of Lord Morley* (London, 1923).*
(14) id., *The Earl of Reading . . . together with an authorised report of his speeches delivered in India* (London, 1924).*

There are two other biographies of political figures, in this case Muslims:

(15) Miyāṇ Muḥammad 'Azīm Ḥusayn, *Fazl-i-Husain: a political biography* (by) Azim Husain (Longmans, Bombay, etc., 1946).
(16) Miyān Aḥmad Shafī', *Haji Sir Abdoola Haroon*, by Alhaj Mian Ahmad Shafi (Karachi, no date (*c.* 1950?)). (Note: *for* Shafī' *read* Sharīf?)

The former is a study of the author's father. One wonders whether the second was commissioned?

Lives of Jinnāḥ we reserve to our '*Political*' heading below.

Two volumes that have come relatively close to treating the rise and development of modernity in the community, have done so in terms of biographies of protagonists on the scene:

(17) *Eminent Mussalmans* (Natesan, Madras (192–?)). (These biographies are anonymous; it is not indicated whether they are by one hand or by several, or indeed whether the authorship is Muslim—we include the work on the presumption that it is.)
(18) Albiruni (pseudonym), *Makers of Pakistan and Modern Muslim India* (Ashraf, Lahore, 1950).

The last is by an I.C.S. (C.S.P.) officer, whose chief historical writing, biographical and synoptic, has been in Urdū.

Further, the only work on the first great Islamic uprising in modern times is biographically orientated:

(19) Baṭ, 'Abdullāh (ed.), *Aspects of Shah Ismail Shaheed; essays on his literary, political and religious activities* (Lahore, 1943).

This is a symposium of English speeches delivered at an 'Ismā'īl Shahid Day' celebration; the Urdū speeches were also published, both separately and bound with this.

Three autobiographies have appeared:

(20) Muḥammad 'Alī. Afzal Iqbāl (ed.), *My Life: a fragment. An autobiographical sketch of Maulana Mohamed Ali* (ed. by Afzal Iqbal) (Ashraf, Lahore, 1942).

(21) The Āghā Khān. *The Memoirs of Aga Khan. World Enough and Time* (Cassell & Co., London, 1954). (There was also a New York edition; I believe that the subtitle was omitted from it.)

(22) Sir Mīrzā Ismā'il, *My Public Life* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1955).

3. *Literary History*

We have remarked that the modern history of the community that has been chiefly written is the literary. This, naturally, has been mostly in Urdū. However, in English also it is noteworthy that this approach has produced two works that, along with the biographical ones just mentioned, come closest to studying the historical development of the community in modernity:

(23) Sayyid 'Abdu-l-Latīf, *The Influence of English literature on Urdu literature* (London, 1924).

(24) Sayyid Muḥammad 'Abdullāh, *The Spirit and substance of Urdu prose under the influence of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, by S. M. Abdullah (Ashraf, Lahore, 1940).

We may also note the earlier title:

(25) Sir 'Abdu-l-Qādir, *New school of Urdu literature: a critical study of Hali, Azad, Nazir Ahmad, Rattan Nath Sarshar, and Abdul Halim Sharar with an introductory chapter on Urdu literature* (1921).*

Though I have not been able to see this book, from the title it would seem rather criticism than history—as may be said also of

(26) Sayyid 'Abdul-l-Latīf, *Ghalib: a critical appreciation of his life and Urdu poetry* ('Chandrakanth Press', Ḥaydarābād, 1929).

and other comparable essays, including studies of Iqbāl.

We must list also, probably under the present general heading, the one historical novel:

(27) Aḥmad 'Alī, *Twilight in Delhi* (by) Ahmed Ali (London, 1940).

4. *The History of Education*

This has, relatively to other topics, several titles to its credit. Is this perhaps not unrelated to the fact that the Muslims, even in independent India today, have been conspicuous in the educational field?

I have heard of a work, said to be about 1912 or so, on Muslim education in India by 'Azīzu-l-Ḥaqq, the Calcutta vice-chancellor; but have not been able to get specifications, let alone see the work. It was preceded by:

(28) Sayyid Maḥmūd, *History of English education in India; its rise, development, progress, present condition and prospects, being a narrative of the various phases of educational policy and measures adopted under the British rule from its beginning to the present period* (1781 *to* 1893) *comprising extracts from parliamentary papers, official reports, authoritative despatches, minutes and writings of statesmen, resolutions of the Government, and statistical tables illustrated in coloured diagrams* (1895),*

and was followed by:

(29) Ghulām Muḥīyu-d-Dīn Ṣūfī, *Al-Minhaj: being the evolution of curriculum in the Muslim educational institutions of India* (Ashraf, Lahore, 1941).

(of which about one-quarter is devoted to the British period); and

(30) Sayyid Nūrullāh and J. P. Nāiq, *A history of education in India* (*during the British period*) (Macmillan, Bombay, etc., 1943; second edition, revised and enlarged, 1951).

5. *Economic History*

I have found only one title:

(31) Anwar Iqbāl Qurayshī, *The economic development of Hyderabad*, vol. i (Bombay, 1947).*

6. *Political*

The line between historiography and political pamphleteering is sometimes thin. The history that is written when it is thin is sometimes good, sometimes not.

In the nineteenth century appeared:

> Fazl-i Rabbī, *The Origin of the Mussalmans of Bengal*, by Khondkar Fuzli Roobee (Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1895).

This, however, being the translation (by whom is not indicated) of an Urdū (Bengali?) pamphlet, *Ḥaqīqat-i-Musalmān-i Bangalah*, perhaps does not count (I have not seen the original). There is then a gap of almost fifty years, except for the essay, not unhistorical,

(32) The Āghā Khāṇ, *India in transition* (by the) Aga Khan (London, 1918).

The Pakistan movement elicited historical writing, some of it quite 'interpretative' in various senses; including biographies of Jinnāḥ:

(33) 'Abdu-r-Ra'ūf, *Meet Mr. Jinnah*, by A. A. Ravoof, second edition, revised (Ashraf, Lahore, 1947; first published 1944).
(34) Matlūbu-l-Hasan Sayyid, *Mohammad Ali Jinnah* (*a political study*), second edition, revised (Ashraf, Lahore, 1953; first published 1945).
(35) Khurshīd Aḥmad Anwar, *Life Story of Quaid-i Azam* (by) Khurshid Ahmed Enver, eighth printing (Young People's Publishing Bureau, Lahore, 1955; first published 1949).

Two histories of the Muslim League party were published:

(36) Muḥammad Nu'mān, *Muslim India*: *rise and growth of the All India Muslim League* (Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1942).
(37) Allāh Bakhsh Rājpūt, *Muslim League*, *yesterday and today* (by) A. B. Rajput (Ashraf, Lahore, 1948)

the latter writer having just before partition brought out the nationalist historical essay:

(38) *India's Struggle* (by) A. B. Rajput (Lion's Press, Lahore, 1946).

After partition there appeared three histories of the background of the new nation, the last two being Pakistan Government productions:

(39) (Matlūbu-l-Ḥasan Sayyid? cf. note 34, *supra*) *The Struggle for Pakistan* (by) M. H. Sayyid (Karachi, 1948). (Note: this reference is uncertain.)
(40) *Pakistan, the struggle of a nation* (Government of Pakistan, Karachi, 1949 (id.)).
(41) Muḥammad Nu'mān (ed.), *Our Struggle, 1857–1947; a pictorial record* [of the Pakistan movement] (Pakistan Publications, Karachi, no date (*c.* 1950?)) (Note: words in square brackets from dust-jacket; not on title-page.)

Of the nationalist Muslims, we may note:

(42) Humāyūṇ Kabīr, *Muslim Politics 1905–1942* (Calcutta, 1943).
(43) Sayyid Maḥmūd, *Hindu-Muslim cultural accord*, by Dr. Syed Mahmud (Vora & Co., Bombay, 1949). ('A series of articles . . . in the *Statesman*'—p. 7.)

7. *Histories of Cities*

I have found three histories of particular cities, including the modern period:

(44) Sayyid Muḥammad Latīf, *Lahore: its history, architecture, remains and antiquities; with an account of its modern institutions, inhabitants, their trade, customs, etc.* (Lahore, 1892).
(45) S. M. Ja'far, *Peshawar past and present* (Peshawar, 1946).
(46) Muḥammad Bāqir, *Lahore past and present (being an account of Lahore compiled from original sources)* (Panjab University Press, Lahore, 1952) (Panjab University Oriental Publications, no. 34).

8. *History of an Historically-orientated Government Department*

(47) Ghulām Yazdānī, *Hyderabad. The Story of the Archaeological Department, 1914–36.**

9. *Collections of Documents*

Finally, one may include, at least as the material for history, but also as expressing a certain type of historical interest, the tendency of late to compile and publish documents, contemporary and recent:

(48) Afzal Iqbāl (ed.), *Select writings and speeches of Maulana Mohamed Ali*, compiled and edited by Afzal Iqbal (Ashraf, Lahore, 1944).
(49) Sharīfu-d-Dīn (ed.), *Leaders' Correspondence with Mr. Jinnah* (1944).
(50) Nawwāb Nazīr Yār Jang, *Pakistan issue; being the correspondence between Dr. S. A. Latif and Mr. Jinnah* (. . . et al.) *on the subject of Pakistan* (Ashraf, Lahore, 1943).

Of speeches: for Iqbāl,

(51) 'Shamloo', *Speeches and statements of Iqbal* (Al-Manar Academy; second enlarged edition, 1948; first published 1945). (The pseudonym is presumably that of a Muslim?)

For Jinnāḥ,

(52) *Speeches and writings* (2 vols., Lahore, 1944).*
(53) *Speeches*, 3 June 1947 to 14 August 1948 (Karachi, 1948).*
(54) *Quaid-e-Azam speaks* (Karachi, 1949).*

The above analytical presentation, it is hoped, may be useful in suggesting what kind of thing has, and what has not, been written. Clearly some writing within our definitions must have escaped our notice; but in principle the above survey is intended to be complete. The pointing out of lacunae is therefore invited.

The history of historiography, however, is adumbrated rather by rearranging these titles chronologically. In this way, one arrives at the following observations—which, within that growth of historical consciousness with which we began, pertain to that aspect that treats of English-language, Muslim-written, book-form, India-orientated materials.

Nineteenth century. The work begins in the 1890's, with S. M. Latīf's two Victorian-British style books on the Panjāb (notes 6, 44), and Sayyid Maḥmūd's history of English education (note 28).

The first decade of the present century. Yūsuf 'Alī's socio-economic study (note 8).

The 1910's. 'Azīzu-l-Ḥaqq on education (between notes 27, 28); and the Āghā Khāṇ (note 32).

The 1920's. A productive decade, with considerable serious work. 'Eminent Musalmans' (note 17) reflects the Khilāfat movement. The bulk of Sir Shafā'at Aḥmad's research (notes 1, 2, 3, 5); Sardār 'Alī's two lives (notes 13, 14); Sir 'Abdu-l-Qādir's and Dr. 'Abdu-l-Latīf's literary studies (notes 25, 23, 26); and Yūsuf 'Ali's general history (note 7).

The 1930's. Curiously, the only book that I could find for this decade is the publication of Sir Shafā'at Aḥmad's Ilāhābād lectures (note 4).

The 1940's. In this period, historical writing seems at first sight to gather momentum: more is produced, quantitatively, in these ten years than in the preceding fifty; that is, than the total previous output. This results chiefly from the impact of politics. More than half the items deal with Jinnāḥ and the Muslim League (notes 33–37, 39–41, 49, 50, 52–54) and several others are political orientated (notes 38, 42, 43, 51). Of more permanent substance are Aḥmad 'Alī's novel on Delhi (note 27), 'Abdullāh's study of the 'Alīgarh movement literature-wise (note 24); Ṣūfī and Nūrullāh-Lā'iq on education (notes 29, 30); the editing of Muḥammad 'Alī's papers (notes 20, 48), and 'Azīm Ḥusayn's life of his father (note 15); the Ismā'īl Shahīd symposium (note 19); Qurayshī's and Ja'far's monographs (notes 31, 45); and the essays by 'Ābid Ḥasan and, especially, Humāyūṇ Kabīr (notes 11, 9).

The 1950's. The first half of the present decade has seen the biographical studies of Albiruni and the lives of Hārūn and Tīpū Sultān (notes 18, 16, 12), and the autobiographies of the Āghā Khāṇ and Sir Mīrzā (notes 21, 22); the monograph on Lahore (note 46); the Pakistan Government brochure on the Pakistan movement (note 41); and 'Ābid Ḥusayn's inquiry into the place of Islām in Indian culture (note 10).

The decade may, before it closes, claim the most serious contribution to date to the writing by Muslims of their own recent history, if works of which one hears, unpublished or in process, appear in print fairly soon. For instance, there is the 5-volume *History of the freedom movement* under Dr. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn now under way; and among doctoral theses lately there have been a growing few on the recent period. It would seem that Indo-Pakistani Muslims are currently turning part of their historiographical attention from the earlier past to the modern period. Yet this remains to be seen. . . .

24. THE THEME OF IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM IN MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING ON INDIA

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The approaching bicentenary of the 'battle' at Plassey which symbolizes the beginnings of British political, as distinct from commercial, empire in India is an appropriate time to review the theme of imperialism and colonialism in modern works on Indian history. At present, these two terms—imperialism and colonialism—are taken to be virtually synonymous and to refer to the phenomena which appear when a state rules over distant areas inhabited by peoples ethnically and culturally alien, and regards its own economic interests as paramount in regulating the economic life of such areas. I shall take the terms in this sense. Because other papers in this series consider historical writing since the rise of modern Indian nationalism, I shall be concerned mainly with authors who wrote before 1900. Hence, inevitably, I shall refer almost exclusively to European, especially British, writers. Inevitably also, I cannot neglect authors who expressed an anti-imperialist point of view. The themes of imperialism and anti-imperialism constantly react upon each other. A discussion of the subject seems to fall into three periods: ante-1800, 1800–70, 1870–1900.

Any writer's employment of this theme with respect to India was obviously constantly influenced by its use with respect to the New World. This is especially true of the period before 1800. The reasons for this are easily understood. In the seventeenth century, India was primarily the concern of a small body of London merchants. It could not have the place in the public mind, especially after 1630, that the American and West Indian colonies did. The problems of conquering and ruling beyond the Cape of Good Hope had not then arisen. The scant attention paid to this theme by English writers before 1700 when referring to India is well brought out in James E. Gillespie's study of the influence of oversea expansion on England in these years.[1] The quotations he uses which reflect the glamour of 'empire' and pride in the colonies almost never concern India. Authors who do mention India nearly always reflect the extent to which contemporary thought about the East was 'commercial' and neither imperial nor colonial. Michael Drayton, for example, in his *Poly-Olbion*

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[1] James E. Gillespie, *The Influence of Oversea Expansion on England to 1700* (Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, vol. xci, no. 1, Columbia University, New York, 1920).

(1613) has many verses extolling the prowess of the early travellers and traders to Goa, Cambaya, Cochin, 'Ganges mighty stream', Bengal, Pegu, and Malacca. Yet such heroes as Fitch, Eldred, and Lancaster are not urged to conquer. Contrast a passage from the same poet's ode *To the Virginian Voyage*:

> You brave, Heroique Minds
> Worthy your Countries Name
> That Honour still pursue
> Goe and subdue:
> Whilst loyt'ring hinds
> Lurk here at home with shame.[2]

It is not therefore extraordinary that the first major historical works including the term 'English' or 'British empire' in their titles were written about America.[3] With regard to India, the theme of imperialism and colonialism could make its way only slowly against the prevailing 'commercial' concepts perhaps most succinctly expressed in prose by Lewes Roberts and in poetry by John Dryden. Roberts wrote in *The Treasure of Traffike* (1641):

> 'It is not our conquests, but our Commerce; it is not our swords but our sayls that first spred the English name in Barbary and thence came into Turkey, Armenia, Muscovia, Arabia, Persia, India, China, and indeed over and about the world; it is the traffike of their Merchants and the boundless desires of that nation to eternize the English honour and name, that hath induced them to saile and seek into all corners of the earth.'[4]

A quarter-century later, Dryden, in *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), put similar ideas into verse:

> The ebbs of tides and their mysterious flow
> We as arts' elements shall understand
> And as by line upon the ocean go
> Whose paths shall be familiar as the land.
>
> Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce
> By which remotest regions are allied
> Which makes one city of the universe
> Where some may gain and all may be supplied.[5]

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[2] Ibid., pp. 275–7. *The Complete Works of Michael Drayton* (London, 1876), iii, 9–12. A. H. Bullen, *Selections from the Poems of Michael Drayton* (London, 1883), p. 11.

[3] e.g., R. B(urton), pseud. (Nathaniel Crouch), *The English Empire in America or a prospect of His Majesties dominions in the West Indies* (London, 1685); John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America* (2 vols., London, 1708).

[4] Gillespie, op. cit., p. 320. *A Select Collection of Early English Tracts on Commerce*, ed. J. R. McCulloch (Political Economy Club, London, 1856, reprinted 1952, 1954), p. 108.

[5] Gillespie, op. cit., p. 281.

These concepts had at least three powerful allies which kept them vigorous long after Plassey: a continuing conviction among Englishmen that in so far as overseas possessions contributed to Britain's prestige among European powers the American and West Indian possessions were far more important than the East Indian; the contemporary failure to regard what was going on in India as at all in the same category with the events transpiring across the Atlantic; and contemporary reluctance in both Britain and France to believe in the possibility of lasting European conquests in India, especially the conquest of the whole sub-continent.

The preoccupation with America of writers who played upon the imperial and colonial theme was well illustrated in the first half of the eighteenth century long before the quarrel between Britain and her colonies thrust them even further into the forefront of public attention. Oldmixon wrote in the Introduction to his *British Empire in America* that it would not be difficult to prove the British colonies much more advantageous to Britain than the Roman colonies were to the Romans. Of the American colonists, he said, 'There are no Hands in the British Empire more usefully employed for the Profit and Glory of the Commonwealth.'[6] He referred incidentally to Portuguese and Dutch East-India profits, but not to English, and it is highly improbable that he thought of the East India Company's 'settlements' when using the term 'British Empire'. A generation later, in 1740, John Ashley wrote: 'Since the real advantages of our American Plantations to the Mother Country are now so universally known, surely too much cannot be offered for so valuable a branch of the British Dominions on which the Wealth and Naval Power of Great Britain does in great measure depend.' Malachy Postlethwayt, whose economic treatises were much read in the 1740's and 1750's, was much more worried about threats to the American colonies, and even to the slave trade, than he was about the fate of the East India Company. As for the American Revolutionary era, the late Sir Reginald Coupland has well described the sense of shock with which the loss of the colonies was greeted—the feeling shared by all ranks of society that there was no 'empire' left.[7]

Although such a feeling did not last long, it reflected the contemporary tendency to regard British 'dominion' in India in an entirely different light from British 'dominion' elsewhere overseas. The words 'colony' and 'colonial' were almost never used of Bengal or India and the word 'empire' seldom. To most Europeans, the idea 'colony' carried with it the idea of 'settlement' by citizens of the parent state. This is well illustrated in such documents as the East India Company's memorial six months after Plassey praying for a grant for all booty and conquests in India and referring to 'property in the soil' as 'vesting in the Company by Indian grants, subject only to Your Majesty's rignts of sovereignty over the settlements as English settlements and over the inhabitants as English subjects who carry with them Your Majesty's laws wherever they found colonies'.[8] No one can study the history of this period without being impressed by the importance of this distinction between the 'settlements' and the 'mofussil', the vitality attributed to 'Indian' authority, the gap between the *de facto* and *de jure* position, and the slow evolution of a doctrine of British sovereignty.[9]

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[6] Oldmixon, op. cit. (1741 edition), p. xxviii.

[7] Sir Reginald Coupland, *The American Revolution and the British Empire* (New York, 1930).

The persistence of the above-mentioned 'commercial' concepts also militated against the use of the word 'empire' in referring to the East India Company's territories. Even Orme, the classic historian of the opening of the new era of conquest, the title of whose work indicates a consciousness of this great change, did not divorce himself from these older views. Such a statement as 'The preservation of their (the English) commerce absolutely depended on the conduct and success of the wars of Coromandel and Bengal' is reminiscent of the earlier writers.[10] More so is the curious English version of Camoens' *Lusiads* which appeared in 1776—a work undoubtedly influenced by Indian events. The translator, William Julius Mickle, interpreted the Portuguese national epic as the poem of the 'birth of commerce'—the epic of 'whatever country has the control and possession of the commerce of India'. It was therefore adapted for British readers with several interpolations including an imaginary naval battle which ran to three hundred lines.[11] An anonymous pamphlet of 1770—perhaps the first directly to compare India and America, *The Importance of the British Dominion in India compared with that in America*—was violently criticized by a reviewer for applying the term 'British dominions' to what were 'nothing but the usurpations of a commercial company'.[12]

Perhaps equally powerful in retarding the development of a concept of 'empire' was the contemporary habit, after the conquest of Bengal, of thinking of the Company more as a new 'country-power' in the circle of Indian 'country-powers' than as an extension of the British state. This is apparent in descriptions of the political *mise-en-scène* in India before 1800—French and Dutch, as well as British.[13] It gave rise to the fear that an able and unscrupulous European (e.g. Hastings) might independently rule such a 'country-power' either in his own name or in that of a puppet Indian prince.[14] It was at least partially responsible for views—often held in Europe before the late 1790's—that European conquests in India were impermanent and that the whole sub-continent would not be subdued.

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[8] *Cambridge History of India*, v, 593. Quoted by H. H. Dodwell in his chapter on 'The Development of Sovereignty in British India'.

[9] For example, see Miss Niharkana Majumdar, 'The Nizamat in the British Period 1765–1793' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Calcutta, 1955).

[10] Robert Orme, *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, third edition (London, 1780), p. 34.

[11] Luis Vaz de Camoens, *The Lusiads*, translated by William C. Atkinson (London, 1952), p. 31. The interpolation is in Book IX in the verses in which Mickle makes Vasco da Gama a prisoner at the Zamorin's court and has the Zamorin order his fleet to attack the Portuguese.

[12] August Hennings, *Gegenwärtiger Zustand der Besitzungen der Europäer in Ostindien* (Copenhagen and Hamburg, 1784–6), iii, 280.

[13] Notably in a document written *c.* 1774, signed N.N., in the Falck MSS. at the Algemeen Rijksarchief at The Hague. Cf. James Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* (third edition, 1793), p. cvi (reprint of Introduction to second edition, 1788). 'Now Hindoostan and the Deccan may be

The consequences of the Company's own injunctions to its servants not to extend its conquests in the years between the battles of Plassey and Seringapatam have been frequently described. Less well known are the views of foreigners like the French scholar Anquetil-Duperron. Though filled with hatred of the British, his prescription for France was not military conquest of India. Conquest by a European power was unjust, made no sense, and was not possible. The strength of the existing 'country-powers' made a policy of alliances with them imperative. He proved to his own satisfaction, by comparing costs of administration with revenue, that Britain could not long hold her predominant position in India; revolt, whether or not stimulated by another Afghan invasion, was inevitable. Against the day of such emancipation of India from British tyranny, he outlined a scheme for an institute of Indian studies in Paris which would have resembled the London School of Oriental and African Studies or the South Asia Regional Studies programme at the University of Pennsylvania.[15]

Hence, even in the era of the founding of the British Indian Empire, the theme of imperialism and colonialism had to make its way against no inconsiderable obstacles; 1800 is perhaps the best approximate date to mark decisively the waning of the older 'commercial' concepts in historical writing about India. The shape of things to come is well symbolized by the 1800 edition of the De la Rochette map of Hindostan embellished in the right-hand corner with a medallion supported by an elephant and subscribed with a Virgilian line appropriately altered: *Tu regere imperio populos, Brittanne, memento*. The failure of the cartographer in 1800 to quote the next line but one—*Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*—may also be noted.[16] As has often been pointed out, in all the outcry, whether in

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said to consist of six principal states . . . The reader will not be at a loss to know that the two Mahratta states, the Nizam, Tippoo, the Seiks, and the British are those I mean.'

[14] Expressed in a letter of John Macpherson *c.* 1784, quoted in Sotheby's Catalogue for the sale of the Melville MSS. (1927); cf. Sir John Malcolm, *Political History of India* (London, 1826), ii, 107; also my discussion of the mutinous designs of Bengal Army officers in the 1790's, *Private Record of an Indian Governor-Generalship* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), pp. 9–16.

[15] Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, *L'Inde en rapport avec l'Europe* (Paris, 1798), i, 237 ff. Cf. James Rennell, op. cit., p. cv, 'The late war in India may convince such persons as require conviction on the subject that conquests made either on Tippoo or the Mahrattas could not be preserved with such an army as the revenues of the conquered tracts would support. We got possession of Bengal and the circars under circumstances particularly favourable; such as may never occur again.' Mickle takes a similar point of view in his attack on Adam Smith in the introduction to the 1778 edition of his translation of Camoens' *Lusiads*.

[16] Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi, 851–3.

Parliament or out of it, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century against the conduct of 'nabobs' in India there was far more concern as to whether their doings benefited the British nation than there was sympathy for the subject peoples.

A detailed examination of the pamphlet literature (not possible here) from 1758 to 1800 would give evidence of the slow but steady progress of both new themes—imperialism and anti-imperialism. On the one hand—from Clive's famous letter to the elder Pitt[17] and Verelst's frank use of the term 'empire'[18] to Wellesley's forthrightness about conquest—would be an ever-growing stream of authors who familiarized the public, especially after 1785, with the idea that they had a great empire in India which offset the loss of America. On the other would be the much smaller stream of authors, exemplified by Burke during the Hastings impeachment struggle, who were anti-imperialist in character. Much of this writing drew its inspiration from the *anti-colonialisme* of the Abbé Raynal.[19]

When we pass to the debate on the opening of the India trade in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the older ideas are definitely left behind. Anyone writing about India could not but be influenced by the universal recognition of the existence of Britain's 'subject empire' there. Yet in the first half of the new century, a theme of blatant, prideful, chauvinistic, or jingoistic imperialism is extremely difficult to discern. Those who wrote to praise the *raj* saw it as something unique in human history; to mention it in the same breath with a mere colony, even to suggest that it was comparable to a colony, was to degrade it. Most of these authors had had long careers in India, and most of them were on the 'orientalist' side of the great controversy with the 'anglicists' on the education issue. All recognized the worth of Indian culture. In their works, the theme of imperialism was one of thoughtful reflection rather than of pride. Hence, from them come quotations on the impermanence of the *raj* so often cited in the recent work of Indian historical scholars. In contrast, those who wrote to criticize the *raj* looked at it through the screen of Benthamism, radicalism, humanitarianism, and 'free trade'. Most of them had had little or no experience in India; they were on the side of the 'anglicists'. In their works, the themes of anti-imperialism and imperialism often mingle and the theme of imperialism reflects paternalism and trusteeship rather than pride in conquest and dominion.

Sir John Malcolm and James Mill are outstanding examples of these two points of view. In Malcolm's *Political History of India* (1826) no evil is so

[17] Ramsay Muir, *The Making of British India* (London, 1923), p. 61. Robert Clive to William Pitt, dated Calcutta, 7 January 1759: 'I flatter myself I have made it pretty clear to you that (with the assistance of the Crown) there will be little or no difficulty in obtaining the absolute possession of these rich kingdoms.'

[18] Hennings, op. cit., ii, 177.

[19] See especially Gabriel Esquer's edition of selections from Raynal, *L'anticolonialisme au XVIII^{e} siècle* (Paris, 1951).

much to be dreaded as the abolition of the Company's Court of Directors which might expose 'that great country' [India] to be treated as a colony without 'having those defences against misgovernment which colonies in general possess'.[20] The virtues of Clive and his fellow *conquistadores* outweigh their every fault and flaw. In Mill, the qualities which earned his work its undeservedly harsh characterization as a 'solemn slander' on British rule stem from his utilitarian and humanitarian associations. For him, the methods of British conquest were hardly praiseworthy.

Since Mill is to receive special treatment elsewhere in this series of papers, I should perhaps here emphasize others of his school of thought. Once again, India received less attention because of a resurgence of interest in a British empire developing elsewhere—the new and 'second' empire in Canada, South Africa, and Australasia. This is well attested by the paucity of reference to India in recent works which analyse 'anti-imperialist' and 'imperialist' thought in the years between the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867. On the rare occasions when India did draw the attention of the 'Little Englanders' they almost never advocated prompt abandonment, realized the necessity of some form of paternalism, but were vague as to what it should be.[21] Most 'Little Englanders' preferred to leave India aside; it was not their main concern. Consequently it was seldom a major concern with their opponents.

In the era of Durham, Buller, Wakefield, and the two Greys, probably not more than one work in ten reflecting the theme of imperialism (or its opposite) had direct reference to India. The lack of such reference powerfully struck the Danish scholar Bodelsen when he wrote his very acute studies on mid-Victorian imperialism. Apart from his discussion of Seeley, Bodelsen had occasion to refer to India only ten times.[22] This absence of reference to India by authors writing in this period appears even more striking in a very recent analysis of the subject—again by a non-British scholar, Ottavio Barié in his *Idee e dottrine imperialistiche nell'Inghilterra Vittoriana* (Bari, 1953). Signor Barié brings into high relief the failure of the 'Manchester school' to grapple with the problem posed by the economic importance to the Midlands of the possession of India. He stresses their fears as to the corrupting influence on the British public of such power as Englishmen were wielding in Asia. Cobden was so distressed at the type of missionaries who were being sent to the East that he feared they were 'making atheists of us all'; he doubted whether Englishmen ought even to try to educate India until they had put their own house in order. Bright upbraided Palmerston for fixing public attention on the Afghan question when threats to English liberties at home should have been England's first concern.[23] Cobden's view of imperialism is summed up in the well-known sentences:

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[20] Malcolm, op. cit., ii, 126. With Malcolm, stand such works as Peter Auber, *Rise of British Power in India* (London, 1837), and Edward Thornton, *History of British India* (London, 1841), except that neither is so colourful. Thornton's indeed is an unexciting narrative which, while praising the *raj*, seeks to allocate blame to its servants when blame is due as in the case of the forged agreement with Omichand or the conquest of Sind. Auber sought to arouse greater public interest 'in a country which has doubtless been brought under British dominion for higher ends than mere pecuniary advantage although instances of the benefits derived in that point of view may be traced throughout the United Kingdom' (p. xlii).

[21] This is, for example, true of Anthony Trollope's Little-Englandism with its unusual views on race and lack of fear of miscegenation because after all 'what were the Anglo-Saxons' if not a mixed race; see Ottavio Barié, *Idee e dottrine imperialistiche nell'Inghilterra Vittoriana* (Bari, 1953), p. 14.

[22] C. A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (New York, 1925).

> If ever there was a territory that was marked out by the finger of God for the possession of a distinct nation, that country is ours whose boundary is the ocean and within whose ramparts are to be found in abundance all the mineral and vegetable treasures requisite to make us a great commercial people. Discontented with these blessings, disdaining the natural limits of our empire, in the insolence of our might and without waiting for the assaults of envious enemies, we have sallied forth in search of conquest or rapine and carried bloodshed into every quarter of the globe.[24]

As we pass from the 1850's to the 1860's, there is an increasing number of writers who are frankly imperialist as regards India and anti-imperialist as regards Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Goldwin Smith is a good example of these. Though he was worried about the corrupting effect of power in India and regarded the ways in which Britain acquired it as execrable, he did not, like Bright, oppose Britain's intervention in what we today call 'under-developed' countries, and he attributed to India the merit of being the 'grand theatre' in which the qualities of an imperial race could manifest themselves. Others whose works expressed similar views were Henry Thring, Lord Bury, Frederick Rogers (later Lord Blachford), and Herman Merivale. Of these, Merivale was unique in struggling to find some solution to the colonial problem other than complete separation, but all thought of India apart and, in so far as they did think of her, believed in the wisdom of firm, paternalistic rule, and the continuance of a *mission civilisatrice*. In short, it may be said that all authors writing between 1820 and 1870 for whom the term 'Little Englander' is in any sense appropriate were troubled—some more, some less—by the spectacle of their great

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[23] Barié, op. cit., pp. 21–26. See Cobden's letter to Ashworth, 10 October 1857, quoted in John Morley, *Life of Richard Cobden* (London, 1881), pp. 207–8: 'Its (India's) people will prefer to be ruled badly according to our notions by its own colour, kith, and kin than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed by a succession of transient intruders from the antipodes . . . They are doing the people of this country the greatest service who tell them the honest truth according to their convictions and prepare them for abandoning at some future time the thankless and impossible task' [of ruling India].

[24] *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden* (London, 1903), i, 104.

'democratic' state despotically ruling over India. With John Stuart Mill, they took what comfort they could from the fact that a despot responsible to a free people twelve thousand miles away was better than a despot responsible to no one but himself.[25]

Of writers concerned wholly with India, Capper and Beveridge were almost the last to be similarly troubled before the advent of Disraelian imperialism. Capper, writing just before the revolt of 1857, used such phrases as 'European aggression upon the East', and refused to absolve the government from responsibility for the poverty of the ryot, but was distressed because 'millions upon millions of Hindus live and die unpossessed of the smallest fragment, the veriest shred of any British manufactures'.[26] Beveridge, writing just after 1857, combined his horror at the events of 1857–8 and his advocacy of the conversion of India to Christianity with his hope for India's eventual independence. 'Should the day ever come that India in consequence of the development of her resources by British capital and the enlightenment of her people by British philanthropy shall again take rank among the nations as an independent state, then it will not be too much to say that the extinction of our Indian empire by such peaceful means sheds more lustre on the British name than all the other events recorded in its history.'[27]

Among the circumstances which led to the flowering of imperialist literature in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Indian revolt of 1857 must take a prominent place. Its role should, however, not be exaggerated. India and Indian events gave more colour than substance to late Victorian imperialism. That imperialism could not have been what it was without India, but India alone did not make it what it was. There are important elements in it which had little directly to do with India. Writers who were primarily attacking a 'separatist' philosophy about colonies thought chiefly in terms of a greater *Britain*. Imperial 'federationists' often thought of India last rather than first in propounding their varying schemes for representing the numerous territories of the Queen in some co-ordinated whole. Africa, rather than India, provided the stimulus for much 'imperialist' writing and speaking in the eighties and nineties, and for 'anti-imperialist' as well. The evils which J. A. Hobson wished to attack were far better and more dramatically exemplified in Africa than in India. The prelude to the Boer War and the Boer War itself focused public attention on Africa in this period much as it was fixed on America a century and a half before.[28]

Nevertheless, it is quite appropriate that the writer who today typifies this period of prideful confident imperialism should be one closely identified with India. In Kipling, the whole movement seems to be summed up; he brought the 'India of the Queen' vividly before thousands of readers on both sides of the Atlantic and, in such poems as the 'White Man's Burden', praised the expanding colonialism with which the new century opened. Kipling probably did more than anyone else to make popular ideas expressed by such writers as Carlyle, Dilke, Froude, and Seeley. He was ably assisted by scores of text-book writers, returned missionaries, authors of books for boys, and diarists and autobiographers among the retired members of the Indian services. It took very little time for Seeley's *Expansion of England* itself or summaries of it to get into the reading of most middle- and upper-class schoolboys. Just as the American younger generation of this period was brought up on Civil War 'hero' stories, so British youth was brought up on 'Crimea' and 'Mutiny' tales, including those of Henty which had such phenomenal popularity.[29] Many books of this kind crossed the Atlantic. My first introduction to India was through the tale of an American youngster kidnapped and spirited away to India where he was seized from his abductors, protected, and sheltered by a heroic and faithful Indian bearer.

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[25] Barié, op. cit., pp. 39–52.

[26] John Capper, *The Three Presidencies of India* (London, 1854), pp. 441, 478.

[27] Henry Beveridge, *History of India* (London, 1869), iii, 709.

[28] J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism* (1902).

Although the theme of imperialism and colonialism was quite undiluted in school books and popular literature of this type in the late Victorian period, it should be remembered that this theme was not unalloyed in some of the authors who were the chief inspiration for such literature. Seeley himself reflected a horror of further imperial expansion, and, as to India, deplored the fantasies of the superiority of the white race which British rule engendered.[30] Carlyle regarded the Indian Empire as impermanent.[31] Froude never seemed to fit India satisfactorily into his greater Britain.[32] Dilke was certain that his greater Britain could not do without India, but he was so troubled by the despotic terms on which India must be kept that he advocated strict supervision of Indian administrators by men who did not share their prejudices. He likewise felt obliged to advocate self-government as an ultimate but extremely remote goal.[33] Even Kipling was far from indulging in constant praise of the *raj*, and a thorough reading of his works might well be recommended for those who wish to understand its shortcomings. Thus, the theme notes of anti-imperialism mingled with that of imperialism even in the apologists for Empire just as it did in the Indian writers such as Romesh Chundra Dutt, who were beginning the task of assessing the merits and defects of British rule.

The flamboyance of much of the popular work of the eighties and nineties was also tempered by the foundation which Sir William Wilson Hunter was then laying for professional historical writing on modern India. In his statistical and analytical studies for the Imperial Gazetteer, in his encyclopaedia articles, and in his own volumes in his 'Rulers of India' series, he set standards, later even better exemplified in his *History of British India* (1900), which he hoped all civil servants turned historian would follow. He thus paved the way for the scholarly use of the records and the professional historical writing in which such authors as Frederick Charles Danvers and William Foster were pioneers.

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[29] George Alfred Henty, *On the Irrawaddy* (London, 1896), and others, especially those concerning the Mutiny.

[30] Barié, op. cit., p. 191.

[31] Ibid., p. 75.

[32] Ibid., pp. 192–202.

[33] Ibid., pp. 170–1.

From this brief survey of the theme of imperialism and colonialism in modern historical writing about India before 1900, we see how short was the period during which that theme predominated. The theme did not hold the centre of the stage from Plassey to Curzon, primarily because the stage was so many-sided. The importance of the many facets of Britain's imperial story for modern Indian history and modern Indian historical writing is not sufficiently realized. Suppose for a moment that there had been no 'second' British empire outside Asia, is it not conceivable that nineteenth-century British historical writing about India would have been preponderantly a paean of praise focusing public attention on India in ways which would have made peaceful liquidation of imperialism impossible? Dutch experience in the same period is apposite—the Indies in the forefront of public attention and writers in the Douwes Dekker tradition not strong enough to pave the way towards future liquidation. Suppose, again, that the Little Englanders had won in the forties and fifties and important British colonies had dropped from the parent stem the consequences for Indian history and the interpretation of it could hardly have been less fateful.

The unique nature of the modern European-ruled Indian Empire itself likewise tended to prevent the theme of imperialism and colonialism from dominating the scene from 1757 to 1900. That empire almost never fitted the 'classic' conceptions—whether Roman, medieval, modern 'colonial', or Marxist. The imperialism of such men as Malcolm could not be blatant, jingoistic, or nationalistic in the European sense for they manifested an Indian nationalism or acculturation which could not be ignored. It may be more than mere coincidence that the Mogul Empire had to die *de jure* as well as *de facto* prior to those late nineteenth-century decades when the theme of imperialism and colonialism really did move to the centre of the stage. Note, nevertheless, how little the term 'colony' was used; 'India our greatest colony' was a phrase current only in the last score of years of Victorian rule, and even those who used it realized there was no other colony like India. Moreover, even at the height of the 'Kiplingesque' period, the theme of anti-imperialism may be found, and in Kipling himself at that!

It is, of course, true that from Disraeli to Curzon all that was prideful, arrogant, and smug in British imperialist writing drew most of its sustenance from the concept of a faultless, virtuous, secure, and happy India, but this attitude was more often reflected in surveys of imperial history for schools and in general works than in books about India. Only after the first wave of Indian nationalist writing had put the *raj* definitely on the defensive do many books on India appear which are extremely reluctant to admit her rulers' faults.

25. SOME ASPECTS OF HISTORICAL WRITING ON INDIA BY PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES DURING THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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The Indian history written by Christian missionaries during this period should be seen in relation to their attitude to Indian religions, particularly Hinduism. Two such attitudes may be distinguished—one of hostility and one of sympathy. The former was predominant during the greater part of the nineteenth century, the latter thereafter.

At first the missionaries had little respect or sympathy for Hinduism, considering it to be at best the work of human folly and at worst the outcome of diabolic inspiration. The distaste which they felt for Hinduism on theological grounds was reinforced by the revulsion which they felt against many social customs and institutions which they associated with it. They had gone to India in order to make converts, and they tended to assume that it was for a similar purpose that God was allowing the British to conquer the country. It might therefore be supposed that the main themes in their historical writing would be on the one hand a bitter criticism of all things Indian and on the other hand an uncritical justification of British rule. In fact, however, this was not altogether so.

Although Charles Grant was not himself a missionary, he was an important personage in missionary circles. Moreover, his *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* had a strong influence upon missionary opinion and contains many of the arguments found in subsequent historical writing by missionaries. It is therefore worth consideration at the outset.[1]

His criticisms of Hinduism are typical of the period of hostility. The people of India, he says, are in a 'degenerate' condition, and Hinduism is the chief cause of this. Dishonesty, perjury, selfishness, social divisions, the low position of women, sexual vice, cruelty to animals—all these evils he considers to be widespread and to be the result of Hinduism. The Muslims also have their vices, but they are 'a bolder people'. However, their history is marked by 'successive treacheries, assassinations and usurpations', and as rulers they have had little effect upon the Hindus.[2]

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[1] C. Grant, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the Means of Improving It. Written Chiefly in the Year 1792* (n.p., n.d.).

On the other hand, Grant criticizes the defects of British rule with equal relish. He disposes quickly of their European predecessors: Portuguese rule had been 'unsystematic and rapacious'; French rule had been 'the meteor of a vain ambition'; the Dutch had 'acted upon the principles of a selfish commercial policy'.[3] Nor was the British record much better, apart from Cornwallis's reforms: 'the history of our rule in Bengal is in great part a history of our own errors, or of the abuses public and private of power derived from us'. Thirty years after the accession of Mir Jafar, 'the country and the people were not in so good a condition as that in which we found them'.[4] Bengal was in fact in a much better state under the last two 'regular' Mughal viceroys, Murshid Quli Khan and Shuja Khan, than it had ever been under British rule.[5] Quite apart from 'local mismanagement', it was the very nature of the British connection that had had such a detrimental effect. 'All the offices of trust, civil and military, and the first lines of commerce, are in the hands of foreigners, who after a temporary residence remove with their acquisitions in constant succession. The government is foreign. Of *native* rulers, even the *rapacious* exactions went again into circulation, and the tribute formerly paid to Delhi . . . was little felt. But the tribute paid to us extracts every year a large portion of the produce of that country without the least return.'[6]

Grant was in fact writing with a specific conclusion in view—to advocate 'the communication of Christianity to the natives of our possessions in the East'. From his criticisms of British rule he drew the moral that Britain owed a debt to India. By his criticisms of Hinduism he intended to show how that debt could be paid—by promoting Western education in the English language, thus weakening 'the fabric of falsehood', and facilitating the spread of Christianity.

Although subsequent missionary historians lacked such a clearly didactic purpose as Grant's, they generally displayed a missionary or at least a religious viewpoint. They tended to regard the history of India as part of some divine plan in which Britain had an important function to fulfil.

Ward confidently declared that 'it must have been to accomplish some very important moral change in the Eastern world' that so much of India had been placed under British rule. Indeed, Britain seemed to him to be 'the only country upon earth, from which the intellectual and moral improvement of India could have been expected'.[7] 'A day of trial' had been given to Portugal, Holland, and France, but they were each 'found unworthy of the great trust, and incapable of accomplishing the good intended for India: they were therefore rejected'.[8] And so Ward dutifully recorded his thanks to God for placing 'this vast and interesting portion of mankind under the British Government'.[9]

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[2] Ibid., pp. 43 ff. [3] Ibid., p. 221. [4] Ibid., pp. 36–7. [5] Ibid., pp. 27 ff. [6] Ibid., pp. 37–8.

[7] W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos: Including a Minute Description of their Manners and Customs, and Translations from their Principal Works* (third edition, 4 vols., London, 1817–20). In the titles of the third and fourth volumes the word 'religion' is replaced by 'mythology'. iii, Preface, p. xvii.

James Peggs took an even broader view: 'The reduction of so vast a portion of the earth under the Roman sceptre was among the providential means of extending Christianity.' The British had likewise been allowed to extend their rule both in India and elsewhere.[10]

J. C. Marshman did not indulge in much of this 'metahistory'. He may have felt precluded from doing so by the fact that he wrote his *History of India* at the request of Calcutta University for a text-book for honours students that could serve as a sequel to Elphinstone's *History*. At one point, however, he spoke darkly of 'a mysterious but inexorable necessity' which had driven the British forward in India, and he concluded his third and final volume with the oracular pronouncement that 'a company of merchants in London thus became the instrument, under the mysterious, but wise and benignant agency of Divine Providence, of establishing the British empire in India, with all its attendant blessings, and of leading the way to the extension of European supremacy throughout Asia.'[11]

Writing later in the century, Caldwell returned to the theme of a divine test of fitness for Empire: 'Race after race of rulers has risen up in this country, has been tried and found wanting, and has passed away.' But he pressed the argument further: 'Can it then be expected that the rule of the English is to last for ever?' He could only answer, 'Perhaps not', although he thought that it would be 'allowed to continue as long as they rule . . . for the benefit of the whole people of the land'.[12]

Pope, a contemporary of Caldwell's, had no misgivings about the future of British rule: 'The analogy of history, and a consideration of the laws which seem to govern human affairs, forbid the expectation that the forms of Indian national life which have passed away should ever reappear. There is no second life for decayed civilisations and nationalities. No Rama will arise to reign, as in ancient fable, over the fifty-six Hindu nations; and Musalman conquerors have had their day.' He made his moral clear: 'From shadowy and misleading phantoms of Hindu independence we must turn away our eyes.' Perhaps afraid that his readers might yet have failed to catch his message he concluded triumphantly in capital letters: 'India's life in future must be identified with that of the PARAMOUNT POWER.'[13]

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[8] Ibid., p. li.

[9] Ibid., Introductory Remarks, p. viii.

[10] J. Peggs, *A History of the General Baptist Mission Established in the Province*, appended to A. Sterling, *Orissa: Its Geography, History, Religion, and Antiquities* (London, 1846), p. 406.

[11] J. C. Marshman, *The History of India, from the Earliest Period to the Close of Lord Dalhousie's Administration* (3 vols., London, 1867), ii, 27; iii, 457.

[12] R. Caldwell, *A Political and General History of the District of Tinnevelly in the Presidency of Madras, from the Earliest Period to its Cession to the English Government in 1801* (Madras, 1881), pp. 229–30.

[13] G. U. Pope, *A Text-Book of Indian History* (London, 1880), p. 479.

But however convinced the missionaries may have been that history was on the side of the British, they were not altogether blind to the defects of British rule. Marshman was as critical as Grant of some of the economic aspects of British rule. He approved of the Permanent Settlement, but added that in general 'Cornwallis was not able to advance beyond the traditional creed of England, that all her colonial and foreign possessions were to be administered primarily and emphatically for her benefit. No effort was to be spared to secure the protection, the improvement, and the happiness of the people; but it was with an eye exclusively to the credit and the interests of the governing power.'[14] The revenue demand in the ceded and conquered provinces was excessive, 'leaving the ryot a rag and a hovel'.[15] The Madras revenue system was 'inherently and incurably vicious'; under it, 'the Presidency remains in a state of stagnant inferiority'.[16] He also criticized the exclusion of Indians from responsible posts: 'it would be difficult to discover in history another instance of this ostracism of a whole people'.[17] But his general attitude was that the advantages of British rule outweighed these defects and justified its extension. In particular, he praised Bentinck's administration, emphasizing policies like the abolition of sati and the extension of education (although he criticized the neglect of the vernaculars). He therefore welcomed the expansion of British power under Wellesley, Moira and Dalhousie. He had little sympathy with the Mutiny, and took care to point out that it was essentially a military affair and not 'a national revolt against our authority'.[18]

Marshman himself admitted that he was writing too soon after the Mutiny to consider it calmly.[19] Pope, writing in 1880, was at least able to suggest that the British had not been guiltless of atrocities. Concerning Cawnpore he remarked that 'circumstances like these account for, while they cannot justify, the indiscriminate slaughter that too often disgraced the British soldiers at this maddening crisis'.[20]

It is, in short, possible to find many criticisms of British rule in missionary writing during this period. Nevertheless, the generally accepted verdict was that in the long run British rule had been beneficial. They would probably have agreed with Anderson's conclusion, although not all would have liked the boisterous manner in which he argued that good had come from evil: 'The thirst for riches, the unscrupulous efforts of ambition, the reckless violence which often struck Hindoos with terror—all these were the disgrace of the English: but yet they hurried them on to Empire. The perfidy, the cunning which overreaches itself, the cowardice, the exclusive bigotry which disgraced the natives, smoothed the way to their subjection; and surely these two results are being directed by the Universal Benefactor to good. We know of no other way in which India could have been regenerated. Had the English in India been a set of peaceful saintly emigrants, what impression would they have made upon the country?'[21]

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[14] *History of India*, ii, 35.

[15] Ibid., 266.

[16] Ibid., pp. 267, 360. But he approved of Bird's settlement, iii, 48–9.

[17] Ibid., p. 49.

[18] Ibid., p. 452. In *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward* (2 vols., London, 1859), i, pp. v–xiv, Marshman emphasized that the Mutiny was not caused by any opposition to Christian influences. J. Cave-Browne, on the other hand, did not hesitate to argue that one of the causes was a fear that the compulsory conversion of India was the ultimate aim of British policy, *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857* (2 vols., London, 1861), ii, 303 ff.

[19] *History of India*, iii, 451.

[20] *Text-Book of Indian History*, p. 403.

It is also possible to find some praise of Indian institutions in missionary writing during this period. Ward conceded that in the ancient Hindu state, in spite of the power of 'a superstitious priesthood' and the absence of 'popular influence' upon the government, there were 'still many cheering proofs of an attachment to science, and of an enlightened administration'.[22] The ancient Hindus, he added with faint praise, 'can never be placed among barbarians, though they may have been inferior to the Greeks and Romans'.[23] Like Grant, Marshman was impressed by Mughal methods of government, and on one occasion remarked that if Akbar had succeeded in conquering the Deccan, 'it would doubtless have been an incomparable benefit to India'.[24] Again, he praised the traditional Indian system of justice as simple and effective in contrast to that introduced by the British.[25]

On the other hand, when the missionaries turned to religious topics in their historical writing they did not always even try to be impartial. At one extreme, Peggs could speak of Satan as inspiring Jagannath festivals.[26] Even Marshman is sometimes betrayed by his choice of language. For instance, he will speak of 'idolatry' in connection with Hinduism. When he means that Jahangir was more inclined than Akbar to govern according to Islamic principles, he says that he 'manifested a more superstitious attention to the precepts of the Prophet'.[27]

But a more sympathetic attitude towards Hinduism emerged during the course of the nineteenth century. This process was no doubt encouraged on the one hand by the disappearance of practices like sati which the early missionaries had found most offensive, and on the other hand by the growth of a more scholarly knowledge of Hinduism.

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[21] P. Anderson, *The English in Western India: Being the History of the Factory at Surat, of Bombay, and the Subordinate Factories on the Western Coast from the Earliest Period until the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1856), p. 392.

[22] *View of the Hindoos*, iii, 44. Slighting references to the Brahman 'priesthood' suggest overtones of European religious controversies. In the same way Peggs seems to have thought that he had made a most damaging criticism of Hindu religious ceremonial by saying: 'This part of the idolatrous scene strikingly harmonizes with scenes beheld at popish funerals in Ireland', *History*, p. 294.

[23] *View of the Hindoos*, iii, 50. [24] *History of India*, i, 119. [25] Ibid., ii, 268.

[26] 'Here Satan seems to have carried his power to the utmost', *History*, p. 169.

[27] *History of India*, i, 126.

Even some of the early missionaries had admitted the existence of a few good features. Ward himself had pointed to some 'sublime conceptions' in Hindu theology.[28] Hough remarked upon the 'sublimity' and 'beauty' of the religious ideas of the ancient Hindu 'sages', although he added that the Brahmans had 'engrafted' upon these pure doctrines 'a system of idolatry as full of abominations as any that ever debased the soul of man'.[29] But a more sympathetic, or at least a more tactful approach was soon apparent. At a General Conference of Bengal Protestant Missionaries in 1855 it was suggested that in preaching and controversy there had in the past been too great an eagerness to attack what seemed to be the vulnerable parts of Hinduism and Islam, and it was stated that satirical comments upon Hindu Gods and Goddesses had since been abandoned. It was further suggested that as a matter of tactics any allusions to Hindu religious practices should be of a conciliatory nature—for example, 'praising the labour they take in their worship, the expense and inconvenience they put themselves to'.[30] These tendencies may have begun as mere matters of technique, arising from the supposition that flattery, or at least conciliation, would be a more effective means of persuasion than abuse, or even criticism. But gradually there developed a fundamental change of attitude. In 1876 James Vaughan, who had been a missionary in Calcutta for nineteen years, could declare that the Hindus had 'approached nearer the true ideal than any other people unblessed with the light of Revelation'.[31] It soon came to be suspected that such a light had also shone upon the Hindus, though not as brightly as upon the Christians. At a Missionary Conference held in London in 1888, G. N. Cobban, a Wesleyan missionary from Madras, argued that 'everything non-Christian is not of the Devil'; all spiritual truth came from God, and there were fragments of truth in Hinduism.[32] At that time this was a minority view.[33] But when another Missionary Conference was held in 1910 there was a wide measure of agreement that missionaries 'should possess, and not merely assume, a sympathetic attitude towards India's most ancient religion'. It was then emphasized that missionaries should have a sound knowledge of Hinduism in order to be able to treat it as a preparation for Christianity (*praeparatio*

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[28] *View of the Hindoos*, iv, p. xx.

[29] J. Hough, *The History of Christianity in India from the Commencement of the Christian Era* (5 vols., London, 1839–60), iii, 4 ff.

[30] *Proceedings of a General Conference of Bengal Protestant Missionaries Held at Calcutta, September 4–7, 1855* (Calcutta, 1855), pp. 47, 55, 170.

[31] J. Vaughan, *The Trident, the Crescent, and the Cross: a View of the Religious History of India During the Hindu, Buddhist, Mohammedan, and Christian Periods* (London, 1876), p. 41.

[32] J. Johnston (ed.), *Report of the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World, Held in Exeter Hall (June 9th–19th), London, 1888* (2 vols., London, 1888), ii, 89.

[33] The older views of the period of hostility still found vigorous expression. For example, F. F. Ellinwood (Secretary, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, U.S.A.) called Hinduism 'the most successful of all Satan's devices to obscure the knowledge of God with innumerable lies', ibid., i, 50 ff.

evangelica).[34] Three years later J. N. Farquhar published his *Crown of Hinduism*, in which he argued that in Christianity the highest ideals of Hinduism were fulfilled.[35]

Thus it came to be generally accepted that missionaries should have a sympathetic understanding of the religions that they were confronting. For this the first requisite was accurate knowledge. As early as 1877 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had begun to publish a series of popular accounts of 'Non-Christian Religious Systems' written by scholars like T. W. Rhys Davids and Monier Williams. Now the missionaries, led by Farquhar, set to work to study Indian religion and culture in detail. Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India* appeared in 1915, and at about the same time he organized the production of three separate series of studies, called respectively *The Heritage of India*, *The Religious Quest of India*, and *The Religious Life of India*. His intention was that each volume should be scholarly in its approach, although his authors were allowed to make comparisons with Christianity. Macphail, for example, inserts into his life of Asoka some criticism 'from the Christian point of view'.[36] The last chapter of Griswold's *Religion of the Rigveda* argues that Christianity is 'the fulfilment of the Rigveda'.[37] Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson's *Heart of Jainism* ends with a chapter forbiddingly entitled 'The Empty Heart of Jainism', which is based upon a similar conception of the relationship of Jainism to Christianity.[38] In some of the volumes in these series, however, the missionary bias was slighter or even non-existent.[39]

The change in the missionary attitude to Indian religions was not confined to the theory that they were all fulfilled in Christianity. It also came to be argued that Christianity in India should itself become an Indian religion, be stripped of its Western accretions and adopt Indian forms and ceremonies, so that Indian Christians need feel no compulsion to adopt European customs or loyalties or be in any way 'denationalized' or deracinated.[40] This view soon received practical expression.[41] It was argued, further, that Christianity itself might be enriched by its contacts with Indian religions and with Indian ways of thinking and living.[42]

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[34] *World Missionary Conference, 1910. Report of Commission IV: The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions* (London, n.d.), p. 171.

[35] J. N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (Oxford, 1913).

[36] J. M. Macphail, *Asoka* (Calcutta, 1926), p. 80.

[37] H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rigveda* (Oxford, 1923), p. xiii.

[38] Mrs. S. Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism* (Oxford, 1915), p. xvi.

[39] For example, M. T. Titus, *Indian Islam: a Religious History of Islam in India* (Oxford, 1930) in which the bias is much less obtrusive, or S. Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture* (London, 1933).

[40] *World Missionary Conference, 1910. Report of Commission III: Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life* (London, n.d.), pp. 256 ff.

[41] For example, J. C. Winslow, *Christa Seva Sangh* (London, 1930).

[42] H. H. Montgomery (ed.), *Mankind and the Church: Being an Attempt to Estimate the Contribution of Great Races to the Fulness of the Church of God* (London, 1907)—a collection of essays by bishops, esp. VI, on 'the possible service of Hinduism to the collective thought of the Church'. Cf.

It may be supposed that these developments were not without some relation, however oblique, to the growth of Indian nationalism. Certainly one implication was that missionaries could benefit from the study of Indian thought for its own sake and without feeling any need to make critical comparisons with Christianity. Thus in 1912 C. F. Andrews wrote his history of *The Renaissance in India* with a reference to its Christian implications, but seventeen years later he was analysing Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on their own merits.[43] His approach to politics seems to have undergone an analogous change. In *The Renaissance in India* he was careful to explain 'how different things are now since the visit of our dear King and Queen—I know not which did most to change them, the King or the Queen, for it was a personal triumph of both from beginning to end—the triumph of goodness and simplicity and love'.[44] But in 1938 in *The Rise and Growth of the Congress* he adopted the orthodox Congress viewpoint, explaining in detail the Congress attitude to British rule but ignoring the Muslim League's attitude to the Congress.[45] Indeed, in his historical writing his main concern was perhaps with the relations between Britain and India. In *Zaka Ullah of Delhi* his aim was to show that there had been a reconciliation between Englishmen and Indians 'after the dark episode of the Mutiny', and to suggest 'how fruitful this genuine meeting of East and West might become'.[46] In the same way he edited some of Rabindranath Tagore's letters and published his own studies of Mahatma Gandhi in the hope that through their eyes 'the West may learn to appreciate the East'.[47]

Edward Thompson was perhaps less temperamentally inclined than Andrews to take up extreme points of view. But he conceived himself to be writing in conscious reaction against orthodox interpretations of modern Indian history. He had two main criticisms of 'official' Indian historiography. On the one hand, he thought it too narrow in scope: 'Indian history, as written, is the "Acts of the Administration"—a sequence of dates, of wars and measures. Moods and tendencies are ignored, except

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L. Wenger (Serampur) arguing that 'the philosophical thought of Hindu India may be taxed to enrich and strengthen the Christian thought of the West'—perhaps an unhappy choice of metaphor—in E. A. Payne (ed.), *Studies in History and Religion Presented to Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson* (London, 1942), pp. 159 ff. Cf. also D. O. Soper, *Question Time in Ceylon* (Colombo, 1948), p. 2, for the view that 'the Old Testament for India should include a great many of the Upanishads'.

[43] C. F. Andrews, *The Renaissance in India: its Missionary Aspect* (London, 1912); *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas: Including Selections from His Writings* (London, 1929); *Mahatma Gandhi: His Own Story* (London, 1930); *Mahatma Gandhi at Work: His Own Story Continued* (London, 1931).

[44] *Renaissance in India*, iii.

[45] C. F. Andrews and G. Mukerji, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India* (London, 1938). The authors explain that Mukerji collected the material and Andrews wrote it up, p. 8.

[46] C. F. Andrews, *India and the Simon Report* (London, 1930), p. 130; *Zaka Ullah of Delhi* (Cambridge, 1929).

[47] C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi: His Own Story*, p. 10; Rabindranath Tagore (ed. C. F. Andrews), *Letters to a Friend* (London, 1928).

when it seems necessary to explain 1857 and the political troubles of our own day.'[48] Like Farquhar and Andrews he paid more attention to the history of ideas and tried to explain the Indian reaction to the West. On the other hand, he also objected to the prevalence of an official bias. A bibliographical note in the *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* asserts that 'general histories of British India . . . written a century or more ago are, with hardly an exception, franker, fuller, and more interesting than those of the last fifty years . . . Of late years, increasingly and no doubt naturally, all Indian questions have tended to be approached from the standpoint of administration: "Will this make for easier and quieter government?" '[49]

In *The Other Side of the Medal* Thompson argued that the British had committed many atrocities during the Mutiny, although their historians had ignored such things and had emphasized instead the atrocities committed by Indians.[50] Andrews referred with approval to this book in his own historical writing.[51] But unlike Andrews, Thompson severely criticized many aspects of the Indian nationalist movement. He had little respect for Mahatma Gandhi's intellectual ability: he spoke, for instance, of the Mahatma's 'infantile confusion of thought' in his arguments in defence of the caste system.[52]

Yet although there was some divergence of viewpoint between Andrews and Thompson, they shared some fundamental assumptions. In missionary historical writing during the period of sympathy there is indeed little metahistorical comment, little discussion of final causes, ultimate purposes, or verdicts of history. But it is possible to detect some presuppositions common at least to Farquhar, Andrews, and Thompson. They thought that British rule had had many good results: it had brought internal peace and social reform. They thought that before it Hinduism had been degraded by customs like sati and large parts of the country laid waste by war and misgovernment. They were of course aware of the defects of British rule: Andrews and Thompson were particularly outspoken about them. But they did not try to justify it by fitting it into some divine plan in the manner of the earlier missionaries. On the other hand, they were sometimes tempted to indulge that characteristic vice of British historians—the casting of moral balance sheets. They seem to have assumed that it would be possible in some way to calculate the advantages and disadvantages of British rule and strike a balance to the credit of the British. Such assumptions occasionally became explicit. For example, in his history of *Suttee*

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[48] E. Thompson, *The Reconstruction of India* (London, 1930), p. 23.

[49] E. Thompson and G. T. Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (London, 1934), p. 665.

[50] E. Thompson, *The Other Side of the Medal* (London, 1925).

[51] *Zaka Ullah*, p. 72; *Rise and Growth of Congress*, p. 74.

[52] *Reconstruction of India*, p. 135. Thompson criticized Andrews for 'filleted sentimentalism' in condemning the Government's arrest of Gandhi in 1922 as unchivalrous. Ibid., p. 144.

Thompson declared that 'it was a higher civilization that won, both with Akbar and the English'.[53] Again, in his *Life of Metcalfe* and in his *Making of the Indian Princes* it is implied that the extension of British power in the early nineteenth century was justified because it brought law and order with it.[54] In *Zaka Ullah of Delhi* Andrews declared that the 'corruption' of the Mughals 'brought its own inevitable retribution'.[55] In presuming thus to act as judges of peoples or periods they did not greatly differ from the earlier missionary historians—or, it may be, from the majority of their countrymen.

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[53] E. Thompson, *Suttee: A Historical and Philosophical Enquiry into the Hindu Rite of Widow-Burning* (London, 1928), p. 47.

[54] E. Thompson, *The Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe* (London, 1937); *The Making of the Indian Princes* (London, 1943).

[55] *Zaka Ullah*, p. 26.

26. J. H. NELSON: A FORGOTTEN ADMINISTRATOR-HISTORIAN OF INDIA

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History is being rewritten: some know why they are rewriting it and others know that it must be rewritten but are uncertain what tone and what form a new approach should take. In such a crisis it is natural to re-examine the works of our predecessors, to evaluate their skill, to assess their honesty, to detect their biases and to determine how far their efforts can be improved upon in manner as well as in matter. Historians of India may be placed provisionally into categories according either to the field they attempted to cover, the style they adopted, or the message, if any, which they wished to convey. Administrators, as a class, have made a marked contribution to historical writing, as indeed to history itself, and it has not proved difficult to expose their principal bias, induced by their connection with the Government and the predispositions and tastes of their English public. When one searches for purely *objective* historical writing in the British period not many authors of that class stand the test of time, and indeed surprisingly few British administrators undertook original research into India's past in a spirit of curiosity, indifferent to the sort of results which an impartial search might provide. One may wonder whether greater contributions to knowledge might not have been made if the responsibility had fallen to the French rather than the British, for if the average administrator lacked leisure the success of the few who tried to contribute suggests that the indifference of the majority was due rather to lack of inclination. Public servants in various offices did indeed make significant contributions, many of which have helped to make them individuals difficult to classify, or to make general statements about, and the only common feature seems to have been their low status from the point of view of the administrative hierarchy. But amongst the British historians of India one individual stands out as unique not merely in his devotion to objective research and in his choice of topic, but in his courage, pertinacity and sincerity in the face of neglect, anger and finally ridicule. Outside the small circle of Indian legal historians he is virtually unknown. If the official know-alls (whom we know so well!) had had their way he would have been consigned, together with his ideas, to oblivion as a 'crank'. Yet just because he typifies that gallant band who persist in being right when the 'powers that be' do not find it convenient to admit themselves wrong, he deserves to be accorded a better fate. The subject of this paper did not appeal to the pride or to the complacency of the British people, but to their sense of honesty. His theme was of immense practical importance and his publications were almost certainly financed largely out of his own pocket. Few had the courage or the discrimination to support him at the most critical time, and he was forced to rely at times upon irresponsible and untrustworthy sources for his data: he often tripped and stumbled and is now, when read by a specialist, more a cause of mirth than of admiration. Yet his work must be placed in perspective, since the story is in many ways instructive. For his main contentions were right and his opponents were wrong—that much is perfectly clear in the light of present-day knowledge. Moreover, he played a leading part in a controversy which is still very much alive; he helped to clear the minds of confused thinkers; he fastened an important and very subtle parcel of guilt upon the shoulders of the administration (as only an historian could have done in that connection); stimulated and encouraged a high standard of judicial performance in his Province for which it is still noted; and must bear his own characteristic share in the persistence of the chief social burden with which that Province is encumbered. He has been neglected because his critics could not see the wood for the trees.

His Career

James Henry Nelson[1] was born in 1838 at London, the only son of Thomas Nelson 'of Onslow House, Brompton, Middlesex, esquire'; he was evidently an unusually bright boy, entering Eton as a King's Scholar. There he shone both in sports and in his studies and in 1856 was admitted to King's College, Cambridge, where he was in turn a Scholar, a Prizeman and, in 1859 under the unreformed Statutes which permitted such an election without dissertation, a Fellow of the College. It was his ambition to serve among the Indian judiciary, and in 1859 he was admitted to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple. In the following year he sat both for his Classical Tripos and for the competitive examination for entry to the Indian Civil Service as then organized. It must have been something of a strain, since he obtained only a Second Class in the Tripos, having promised a rather better performance. He married in 1861 (thereby vacating his Fellowship) and went to Madras, where he was to spend the next twenty-five years.

Before detailing his appointments and the order in which his publications appeared we should reflect on what Nelson's prospects were when he arrived as a raw member of the M.C.S. ('that civil service which has boasted, and yet boasts, in its ranks some of the greatest and best men that humanity has produced') about six years after the Indian Mutiny. Having chosen the judicial side the highest to which he could aim was a seat on the bench of the Madras High Court, with, if he were fortunate, a remote chance of becoming by seniority the Chief Justice, with a knightood and perhaps membership of the Privy Council on his retirement. It was true that barristers in indifferent practice at home had been sent out to Indian High Courts by political patronage[2] and had thus blocked the path of Civil Servants trained in the Districts, and such promotion had even been accepted by English barristers who had practised in Indian High Courts. But Nelson had before him the example of judges such as L. C. Innes, who, commencing almost at the bottom of the ladder in the 1840's, was about to become a Judge of the High Court as a reward for faithful judicial administration in the *muffasil*. In order to obtain such promotion certain steps had to be taken distinct from the mere negative requirement of not publicly disgracing himself in subordinate appointments. The regular method of seeking distinction open to the aspiring Judge was publication. Innes, for example, fancied himself as a literary figure and was no doubt socially agreeable, but even he would have had a feebler chance had he not published a book on mortgages. Nelson seems to have grasped the position accurately, but he made a fatal mistake. He chose a topic of fundamental concern, wrote too candidly about it, underestimated the weight of inertia and suffered from the simplicity of supposing that a frank exposure of remediable abuses would be welcomed by his superiors.

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[1] Particulars of his life and career I owe to the information most kindly supplied by Mr. A. N. L. Munby, Fellow and Librarian of King's College, Cambridge, to Nelson's own statements in his works, to the *Middle Temple Admissions Register* (London, 1949), p. 527, and to the *India List for 1887*, pp. 192–3.

In 1863 Nelson was settled down as an Assistant Collector and Magistrate, and from 1865 to 1867 he was Judge of the Court of Small Causes at Madura. His aspirations received their first encouragement in 1865 by an order to compile a Manual of the Madura District. This[3] turned out to be an extraordinary work, of course of a pioneering character, intended for the enlightenment of Government and in particular District officials: the home public was hardly before Nelson's mind. He wrote on the geographical, climatic, geological, agricultural, and ethnological features of the District, and gave a large section up to political as well as revenue history. Nelson had been forced to become an historian and an amateur sociologist. Certain facts that struck him at that time served to inspire him for the rest of his career. The book, to which we shall return, had a message, consistent probably with Nelson's private feelings as well as with his immediate interests: in short he congratulated the people of Madras (who would never read his book) on the coming at length of a beneficent and wise administration.[4] So far he was on the right lines. Before the book could be published, however, he underwent two moves. In order to enlarge his knowledge of the manner in which the High Court went about its functions he was appointed Assistant Registrar of that Court for part of 1867, and immediately afterwards he was posted to Kumbakonum as Judge of the Small Causes Court there. It was there that he compiled his *Commentaries on the Code of Criminal Procedure* (Madras, 1869). In 1872 he was Acting Civil and Sessions Judge at Tranquebar and in the same year he was appointed to be Civil and Sessions Judge of Tanjore, an important post for which his growing experience not less than his publications had qualified him. His *Commentaries on the Code of Civil Procedure* (Madras, 1872) was rewarded by the appointment as District and Sessions Judge of Cuddapah in 1876. In 1871 he had been called to the Bar at the Middle Temple, and, though he had, of course, seen nothing of the work of a practitioner except from the detachment of the bench, this new status served as an additional qualification for elevation. Nelson had every right to expect in due course to take the next step, namely to the High Court. But further publication was required.

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[2] The instance of Mr. Justice Norris, who created a sensation in Calcutta (R. C. Palit, *The great contempt case*, Calcutta, 1883), will be remembered.

[3] *The Madura country: a manual compiled by order of the Madras Government* (Madras, 1868).

He must have consulted his friend and contemporary in the judicial service, A. C. Burnell, with whom he was probably fairly intimate at Tanjore.[5] Burnell's part in the story which follows is somewhat peculiar. He had become an enthusiastic and well-established orientalist, and, though occasional unjustified generalizations and hasty guesses mar much of his work, Burnell remains the best example of the administrator-historian on ancient and medieval India—since, after all, his many publications are still resorted to as authorities.[6] But it was unlikely that he would be a very practical guide for Nelson. His wide knowledge of Sanskrit, his mastery of Tamil and Kannaḍa, his ability to cope with inscriptions and all sorts of documents likely to be met with in South India, and his then unique acquaintance with Indian law books, might have fitted him to be a senior Judge in any administration. He had the pathetic belief, which originated perhaps in his youth, that orientalism was the key to promotion in a civil service administering an oriental people. No Englishman of that period, not even the indefatigable C. P. Brown

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[4] 'A very marvellous change for the better' following upon the coming of the British: prefatory letter, p. v; see also Pt. II, 5, 30; Pt. III, 151, 174–6.

[5] Nelson dedicated the *View* to him, and the terms of the dedication are revealing. Burnell was already an *honorary* Doctor of Philosophy of Strasburg. Nelson very occasionally criticized him, but how highly he regarded him is evident from *Indian Usage*, pp. 4–5. He says Burnell was 'unhappily not found to be good enough for a seat on the bench of the Madras High Court'.

[6] His translations of Varadarāja's *Vyavahāra-nirṇaya* (*dāyabhāga* portion), of the *Vyavahāra-Mādhavīya* (same portion), of the *Dāyāda-daśaślokī* and of Manu, besides his work on South Indian Palaeography, are frequently resorted to.

(1798–1884),[7] knew so much of the cultural background of the people he served: even the incomparable H. T. Colebrooke (1765–1837) had lacked his wide linguistic and literary knowledge and his historical flair, and Colebrooke's nearest rival in Madras, F. W. Ellis, was less widely if more profoundly learned, and he had in any case been dead more than fifty years when Burnell became a District Judge. It seems certain that in 1876 Burnell himself did not realize that in order to attain the highest ranks in the Madras Civil Service (which term must be taken to exclude the posts in the Madras College and that of Translator to Government) the last qualification that was required was wide acclaim as an orientalist. He might have saved the time he spent on Sanskrit, on Varadarāja and Mādhava and Manu and also on the Tamil classic of Tiruvalluvar; had he concentrated on legal practice in London and written a treatise on Real Property there is no knowing to what heights he might have attained. The unfortunate scholar seems to have recommended Nelson to write a book upon a fundamental question of current legal administration, a book which could not easily be rivalled by any of the Englishmen practising at the Madras High Court Bar, a book, that is to say, that would be an original contribution to knowledge, appropriate for a District Judge to write and not unworthy of the recognition of a future High Court Judge. A subject was ready to hand. Burnell was keen to have it shown that the law of the Sanskrit law books was being wrongly administered in Madras. His own statements to this effect[8] were not receiving much attention and he was glad to have a non-orientalist coadjutor: if the point were proved to the satisfaction of the Judges at Madras his own books, expositions of the Sanskrit law upon what he took to be sound principles, would be more highly esteemed. Nelson was only too glad to tackle the task, and *A view of the Hindū law as administered by the High Court of Judicature at Madras* (Madras, 1877) was the result.

The tone of this book (when allowance has been made for the dramatic and typically over-emphatic style which he then employed)[9] was moderate, argumentative, and constructive. To the Judges of the High Court it was respectful. It was in most respects a more satisfactory book than any which followed it. It is marred by an internal self-contradiction,[10] but that does not detract from its propaganda value: it raises questions, submits doubts backed by attractive arguments and points towards a method of amending the abuses and abating the mischief of which the author complained. Madras had somewhat recovered from the attacks upon the administration of criminal justice and the police which were poured forth twenty years before, and the time seemed ripe for an attack on the bases of the administration of an important section of civil jurisdiction. Although its whole tenor was a criticism of the Madras High Court's administration of the so-called Hindu law, the law controlling the most intimate lives and happiness of nearly thirty millions of people, the book seems to have been well received in Madras as the product of sincere research and was even enthusiastically welcomed in England and upon the continent.[11] John D. Mayne, a practitioner in the Madras High Court and then writing his celebrated *Hindu law and usage* (Madras, 1878), not only chose his title under Nelson's influence but gave his work deep consideration.[12] Yet, quite apart from the academic effect of his work (which will be considered below), the desired result was not obtained.

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[7] Known especially for his Telugu dictionary, but see also his edition (Madras, 1852) of *Three treatises on Mirāsi right*, a work which Nelson occasionally refers to. Brown's career is outlined in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. His manuscript volumes of historical disquisitions are in the India Office Library (MSS. Eur. D. 301, 302).

[8] In the Note to the *Dāyāda-daśa-ślokī*, more properly *Dāya-dasá-ślokī* (1875) and in his introductions to Mādhava, Varadarāja and Manu. *View*, pp. 13, 17, 21, 25, 28, 34–5, 65, 95, 110, 118, 131, 133.

[9] Some typical passages: 'Hindu law' was 'an aggregate of discrepant and inconsistent guesses, made by unsympathetic persons wholly ignorant of Sanskrit, at the meaning of generally imperfect and sometimes questionable translations of mutilated Sanskrit texts, themselves of doubtful authenticity, taken at random from purely speculative and religious treatises on what ought to be the rules of conduct for an ideal (i.e. supposititious) Āryan community' (*View*, p. 13). Again (ibid., p. 15) the result was that 'Houses are divided against themselves, respectable families are brought to beggary, doubt and uncertainty prevail everywhere, and the value of property is rapidly falling.' The text-books are irrelevant for the purposes of administration for (ibid., p. 27) 'really the conduct of an ordinary Cheṭṭi, or Maravan or Reḍḍi of the Madras Province, unless

In 1880, instead of a promotion to the High Court, Nelson was moved to be District Judge of South Arcot and Chingleput. By this time the problem which had inspired him to write the *View* had become almost an obsession, and the removal to the central from the southern parts of the Province spurred Nelson on to further publication. Since 1877 he had been reading more widely. His reliance upon his former sources had

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indeed he happens to come into our courts as a litigant, is no more affected by precepts contained in the Mitāxarā than it is by precepts contained in the Psalms of David'. And (ibid., p. 147) 'if we want to find "high castes" in the Madras Province we must go about with a lantern at noon to do it'.

As for Halhed's *Gentoo Code* (see note 93 below) he says (*Prospectus*, p. 13), 'That work was hastily put together by a number of ignorant and incompetent persons, the honesty of whose motives is by no means above suspicion, and having been badly done into Persian by Hindūs, was badly done into English by Halhed . . .' For examples of his sense of humour see *Madura country*, Pt. II, p. 79 and *Letter*, p. 17.

[10] After denying the applicability of the Sanskrit law books he goes on to charge the High Court with improperly construing and applying them. Later he finds that many of the texts actually support his case, directly or indirectly, and he does not scruple to rely upon them. This can be reconciled upon the basis that he assumes for the purposes of argument that the High Court properly takes the texts as authorities, but the result is a very complicated investigation. See Preface, p. iii compared with pp. 74–5, 109.

[11] Nelson's *Letter*, pp. 11, 14; Jolly, *Centralblatt* for 10 Nov. 1877; Barth, *Revue Critique*, No. 26, 1878. The review of his *Prospectus* in the *Law Journal* for 19 November 1881 was very long and commenced, 'If the bench of India is adorned with many men equal in talent and learning to Mr. Nelson that country must be singularly fortunate in her judges.' The same book was warmly if critically reviewed by Barth in the *Revue Critique* for 28 August 1882.

[12] Preface and first three chapters. In French India Nelson's work was received with real sympathy and substantial agreement. Reference may be made to any of Léon Sorg's works.

proportionately diminished and, perhaps with additional help from Burnell, who preferred to let Nelson bear the brunt of the conflict while he remained buried in his translation of Manu almost up to his death in 1882, he commenced thorough searches through records of Indian history which were hardly known to the South Indian judiciary, let alone the general public. The result was the triad of works, his *Hindū law at Madras*, originally a paper read to the Royal Asiatic Society[13] and published separately in London, 1881; his *Hindū law in Madras in 1714*, published in 1881 in the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* for 1880,[14] and finally *A prospectus of the Scientific Study of the Hindū law* published in London in the same year. The tone of all three, but particularly the last, was marked by an acerbity, urgency and uncompromising clamour which was absent from the *View*, and it immediately appeared that Nelson was having the contest all his own way. Many were disposed to agree with his main contentions, while differing from him in details. Viśvanāth Nārāyaṇ Mandlik, the esteemed Hindu law scholar, accepted his main points,[15] and a certain P. Samy Iyer published an *Introduction to True Hindu law* which relied largely on Nelson's attitude to the subject.[16] European, especially continental reviewers, praised Nelson's industry and valour in exposing a major scandal of British rule.[17] Jolly, Maine, and Barth took Nelson seriously, and if Law Professors like Sarvadhikari differed from him and were somewhat sarcastic at his expense they were incapable of disproving his main contention.[18] Bühler does not seem to have bothered with his views, and Mr. Justice West of the Bombay High Court, though he had not the courtesy to refer to Nelson by name except in a reference to his *Madura Country*, devoted some space to consideration of his opinion on the future of customary law.[19] The Madras High Court itself was stung by the attacks, and Mr. Justice Innes took it upon himself as the Senior Puisne Judge and, in the character of an ex-Vice Chancellor of the University, as a patron of science in Madras to throw together, as he put it, a refutation of Nelson's case. In his *Examination of Mr. Nelson's Views of Hindu law in a letter to the Right Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff, Governor of Madras*[20] he begged the Government not to take Nelson's advice. He delivered a violent attack upon Nelson's work which was in parts successful and evidently not insincere,[21] but was marred by some misrepresentations of Nelson's views[22] and by some shocking discourtesies and damaging calumnies.[23] Innes, whose contributions to literature and even to law are now almost entirely forgotten, may be rescued from oblivion through his ungentlemanly attack on Nelson, who, even if regarded as an enthusiastic and over-zealous supporter of a lost cause, did not deserve the treatment inflicted upon him by Innes's tender pride.[24] Nelson rapidly replied in his *Letter to Mr. Justice Innes, touching his attack on Nelson's View of Hindū law* (Madras, 1882), but the reply was filled with quibbles and protestations of injured innocence and did little to advance the cause. And Nelson's chances of promotion were gone beyond recall. He wrote nothing more until the year of his retirement, 1887, when in his *Indian usage and judge-made law in Madras* (London) he made a more leisured and careful refutation of Innes' hostile arguments, a further exposure of the system he was attacking, a modification of some extreme views he had originally held, a more careful investigation of the Hindu law as administered by the High Court up to that date, an appreciation of the improvements made by well-wishers on the Bench, and a proclamation that many of his minor contentions had been, with the lapse of time, abundantly vindicated. There is more research in this book but it is more defensive in tone, and an obsessional element obtrudes itself more frequently. He still felt, wrongly, that the door was not shut on his arguments.

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[13] *J.R A.S.*, N.S. xiii, 1881, pp. 208-36. Nelson subsequently disowned both this and the next following work: *Letter*, pp. 3, 23. But they were useful contributions.

[14] pp. 1–20.

[15] In the *Prospectus* he relies upon Mandlik repeatedly, and we find their mutual satisfaction indicated in *Letter*, pp. 11, 21 and *Indian Usage*, pp. 186, 201 etc.

[16] *Prospectus*, p. 87.

[17] *Indian Usage*, pp. 22–3; see note 11 above.

[18] *Indian Usage*, p. 182.

[19] West and Bühler, *A digest of Hindu law*, third edition, 1884, pp. vi–vii.

[20] Madras, 1882.

A colourful character, sometimes petty and sometimes ludicrous in his conjectures[25] and inferences, he was throughout undaunted by the reflection that his literary career had been directed to the frustration of his professional career. Among those legal circles that remember him it is fashionable to dismiss him with such remarks as, 'He overstated his case', but shorn of its disagreeable and unnecessary array of 'proofs' his theme remains accurate. A certain dishonesty in the administration of the civil law to Hindus was patent in Nelson's time; he was employed in that part of India where the defect was most obvious; those who were in control of the situation had neither the courage nor the ability to reverse the trend of events and Nelson was left as a 'voice crying in the wilderness'. The dishonest course was easier, cheaper and more attractive on superficial *moral* grounds, and when Indian advocates and judges took up the burden which in Nelson's young days had been carried almost exclusively by Britons, they did not fail to persist in the prevailing error. This error (though it is not regarded as such) is taken for granted by the present Parliament (see below), and thus it is true to say that Nelson's enemies have won. Yet as an historian, as an unbiased researcher into the facts unhampered by any obstacle except the poverty of his source-material and the unreliability of his orientalist advisers, academically speaking quite free from an ulterior motive, and as a forward-looking analyst of history Nelson's virtue remains untarnished: for it is not the test of an historical ability that we should find the present generation enamoured of the author's views.

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[21] The most successful parts are his refutation of Nelson's point that public ignorance of the 'authorities' directly proves their non-applicability and his explanation of F. Bouchet's letter of 1714 in a light more consistent with orthodox theory. He fairly admits the unsatisfactory condition of the law of adoption and the fact that the High Court had made undue difficulties about recognizing customs (though the admission is apparently very grudgingly conceded).

[22] *Letter*, pp. 6, 8, 21, 40–1.

[23] Nelson's statements were 'often reckless and inaccurate, and the conclusions drawn erroneous. His opinions are however asserted with such assurance and are so constantly reiterated that they are almost certain to find acceptance with the half-educated portion of the population of Southern India' (*Examination*, p. 2, cf. p. 3). He stupidly denies Nelson's right to criticize a rule established by the High Court: 'I do not understand how Mr. Nelson can venture to rely upon his opinion upon such a question as conclusive against that of the Judges who decided the case' (ibid., p. 64, cf. *Letter*, pp. 14–15). Nelson was probably self-duped if not duped by others (*Examination*, pp. 74–75) and he was fomenting uncertainty and litigation. Innes hit him below the belt when he pointed out (ibid., p. 96) that whatever Nelson wrote in his books he followed the High Court in his decisions from the District Court bench (as of course he was bound to do).

[24] It is curious (*Indian Usage*, p. 14) that Innes was perfectly content to pass the blame on to the Privy Council or the Sudder Diwani Adalat or to involve other High Courts in the obnoxious rule, if thereby he could exculpate the Madras High Court or show that its guilt was shared: *Examination*, pp. 80–6. Of course this was no answer to Nelson.

[25] Two original notions deserve mention: he guessed that Dhārēśvara (Bhoja) was Dārā Shukoh (*Prospectus*, p. 75) and that sections of mankind had adopted polyandry by imitating the dog and polygamy (sic) by imitating the goat (ibid., p. 159 n. 2)!

Nelson and Caste in Madras

Nelson's achievements of a permanent character in law have been two-fold: a negative achievement in that he has shown that the whole trend of the administration of the Hindu law has been based upon a lie from about 1800 until 1955; a positive achievement in that his sharp criticism, which despised no weapon likely to afford any support to his case, kept the entire Madras Bench and Bar on its toes. Even Innes J. was keen to watch for opportunities to justify his attitude before his invisible challenger, and Chief Justice Turner's debt to Nelson is beyond question. Although the volume of Sanskrit legal material available in the whole of the Madras Presidency in 1815 was probably less than that available in one Bengal village of Naddea and although Brahmans learned in the *dharmaśāstra* (Hindu jurisprudence) were extremely rare in the South at that period, and although few of the Judges even at the end of the nineteenth century knew any Sanskrit and few of the practitioners imbibed anything of a living tradition of *dharmaśāstra*, while numbers of precedents were based upon misunderstandings of a few texts thought authoritative in Ellis's time, nevertheless Madras soon became the first among the High Courts in the administration of the Hindu law and enjoys to this day an unchallenged pre-eminence in that field. Consciousness of the need to maintain a high standard was forced upon them by Nelson, and the Presidencies which knew no such character remain undistinguished for either accuracy or reliability.

But Nelson's background and training, when joined to the notoriety which he acquired in Madras, made an independent and unfortunate contribution to social developments there. In the *Madura country* and later in the controversial works Nelson reveals his attitude towards the people under his care. His distance from them intellectually and sentimentally is vast, but no greater than that of the average Civil Servant of the time; he valued the work of those who had been able to get into complete sympathy with Indians, but he did not pretend to any such thing himself.[26] He observed and defined, and attempted to explain, the gulf which then lay between the Brahman and non-Brahman in Madras.[27] This gulf was one of the chief props to his theory regarding Hindu law. It had been marked in Ellis's time (served 1798–1819), and Nelson certainly read,[28] though he utilized indifferently,[29] Ellis's remarkable paper in which the author's anti-Brahman bias is clearly revealed.[30] This bias, which had no academic or professional justification in Ellis's case, depended partly from the belief current among Christian missionaries that the Brahmans were unworthy purveyors of all evil and the greatest obstacle to large-scale conversions, and partly from the caste structure in Madras, where castes antagonistic to Brahmans had always maintained a controversial parity with the latter.

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[26] He lived at a time when it was not necessary (however prudent it might have been) to be polite to Indians in writing largely for home consumption: expressions revealing his attitude are to be found in *Madura country*, Pt. II, pp. 18, 21, 52–3, 69; Pt. III, p. 172; *Prospectus*, p. 76. In *Madura country*, Pt. II, p. 73, he says, 'The Chakkilans . . . are men of indescribably drunken and filthy habits, and their morals are very bad. They are of course regarded with the greatest abhorrence. This is typical of his 'English drawing-room' manner of disposing of numerous Tamil castes. He abhors lethargy and approves ambition (ibid., Pt. III, pp. 174–6). He admired the Maravans ('a tribe of professional robbers and cut-throats', *View*, p. 28) for their addiction to bull-running and speaks well of the Nattambādiyans, many of whom were Christians. He speaks warmly of Robert de Nobilibus (*sic*), de Britto and Beschi and others who lived for years in intimate contact with Tamils.

[27] *Madura country*, Pt. II, pp. 11, 12, 24; Pt. III, pp. 159, 171, 176; *View*, pp. 6–7, 118, 139–40; *Prospectus*, pp. 25, 65, 91, 97, 104–5, 111, 122, 161.

[28] *Prospectus*, p. 79; *Indian Usage*, p. 40.

[29] He was very willing to refer to Ellis's statement that the Tamils did not fully receive the *dharmaśāstra* law (*View*, pp. 92–3; *Prospectus*, p. 104), but apart from criticizing Ellis's preference for the *Mitāksharā* he does not pay any attention to the tone of Ellis's paper, which strongly supported the authority of *dharmaśāstra* texts in South India.

[30] In 1817 Ellis, then Collector of Madras (see details of his career in Dodwell and Mills, *Alphabetical List*, London, 1839), gave to Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief Justice of Ceylon and an indefatigable searcher into customs, a copy of his paper *Sources of Hindu Law* which introduced a *Tamil* translation of the *Mitāksharā* (made by a non-Brahman) which was intended to be used for the education of Madras Civil Servants. The paper appears to have been printed after his death in the Madras Literary Society's *Transactions* for 1827, and at Sir A. Johnston's instance was published again in London in 1833 (*Law Magazine*, ix, pp. 217–24). This paper, together with the extremely learned paper on Mirāsi Right reprinted by Brown in 1852 (see note 7 above), makes us regret that Ellis died before he could complete a full-scale treatise on history or law. His suspicion of Brahmans, and in particular Pundits, was quite remarkable. One may see his comments on a Pundit's answer in Sir T. A. Strange's *Hindu law*, vol. 2, quoted *View*, pp. 74–5.

From Ellis's time until that of Nelson there had always been opportunity for the prevailing British antagonism there towards the Brahmans to be merged into a common attitude towards the local population as a whole. The natural tendency of the British to ignore caste-distinctions had been checked by an ambivalent attitude combining suspicion of the Brahmans and contempt.[31] But with the greater utilization of Brahmans in all branches of the public service there might have been some hope of the disappearance of this feeling. Had it disappeared and had the officers of government refused to sympathize with anti-Brahman tendencies it is possible that the tale of centuries of Brahman-non-Brahman antagonism might have been cut short. Some may think this possibility remote, yet it is certain that Nelson's work, coming at a critical time in the formation of the educational and administrative policies of the Province, tended to confirm the distinctions between Brahman and non-Brahman in a position deserving of pity and protection; and when jealousy was finally aroused by the repeated success of Brahmans in examinations and the large representation of Brahmans in posts in public employment there was no moral force to prevent what happened. A movement nominally to elevate and encourage the 'backward' classes actually began to operate so as to frustrate the incipient economic advantage of Brahmans. Thus while it might appear to be in the national interest that the best-qualified men should obtain the highest-salaried posts, the principal States of South India have committed themselves in various degrees of outspokenness to the policy of preferring, if need be, servants of lower prowess in examinations to Brahman servants. (An anti-Sanskrit and (more lately) an anti-Hindi movement in Madras is a closely connected phenomenon.) For example, a few years ago in Government Medical Colleges in Madras only two places were open to Brahmans out of a total of fourteen, and this irrespective of the number and position of Brahmans in the class-list in qualifying degree-examinations. And when this was successfully challenged in the well-known case of *Sm. Champakam Dorairajan* v. *The State of Madras*,[32] the Indian Legislature passed the Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951, to legalize such discriminatory practices.[33] Such a tradition, which an observer can only deplore, owes not a little to the bias of British historians of the nineteenth century, and Nelson must bear his unhappy share in the responsibility for its perpetuation.

Nelson's Contentions

Nelson's case may be put very briefly. When the British became responsible for the administration of justice to Indians a promise was made[34] that in certain intimate matters of family law the customs and usages of the Hindus would be administered to them as they would have been administered had the responsibility remained with native tribunals. This promise, Nelson said, had been broken by the Madras High Court's attempting to apply to all the non-Muslim inhabitants a system of law which had been carelessly and improperly invented by Judges[35] and advocates who were not qualified in Sanskrit[36] upon the basis of poor translations[37] of Sanskrit works of little or no authority.[38] Moreover, there was no ground for supposing that those works had been applicable to more than the smallest fraction of the population before the British period[39] and in all probability had never applied to that small fraction except in a few respects.[40] In fact, Nelson claimed that a fantastic situation had developed in which the law of certain Sanskrit law books was being applied, as if it were their law and custom, to millions of people who had never been governed by any of their contents before, who were not in sympathy with their tenor, and who were entitled to have their own customs applied to them, customs which differed from the law as set out in those books as much as did the laws of China.[41] Moreover, Nelson contended that the law of those books, called *dharmaśāstras*, was being very incompetently administered,[42] so as to lead not merely to incorrect but also to conflicting decisions,[43] which gave rise to dangerous and often costly uncertainty.[44] When he traced back the reasons for the belief that the *dharmaśāstras* were applicable to all non-Muslims in South India he found nothing but expressions of opinion on the part of Colebrooke, who was never in South India,[45] and Ellis, whose informants might be quite unreliable,[46] and their blind followers, which seemed to have nothing but hearsay behind them and an exaggerated regard for certain texts, which, Nelson suspected, were artificially revived by Sir

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[31] For Nelson's attitude see note 26 above. It was not untypical.

[32] (1950) 2 Mad. L. J. 404 (F.B.).

[33] See Basu, *Commentary on the Constitution of India* (second edition, 1952), p. 79.

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[34] Letters Patent of 20 February 1798; the relevant provisions copied in Charter of Supreme Court, 26 December 1800; confirmed in Art. 18 of Charter of High Court, 1862 and Art. 19 of the Amended Charter of 1865. Also Madras Regulation III of 1802, sec. 16 and the Madras Civil Courts Act, 1873, sec. 16. Moreover, the Queen's Proclamation of 1 November 1858 guaranteed customs and usages. *View*, p. 2; *Indian Usage*, pp. 7–8.

[35] *View*, pp. 52, 119, 131; *Letter*, p. 44; *Prospectus*, p. 3; *Indian Usage*, passim. He calls the decisions of the High Court 'noisome rubbish' (*Prospectus*, p. 186).

[36] *View*, pp. 2, 12; *Prospectus*, p. 174; *Letter*, pp. 14–15.

[37] *View*, p. 12; *Indian Usage*, p. 16.

[38] *View*, pp. 12, 91, 93–4, 96–7, 112, 113, 133; *Prospectus*, p. 2 n. 1, pp. 37–42, 53, 61, 66, 73, 86, 176; *Indian Usage*, pp. 221, 367 and ff.

[39] *View*, pp. iii, 118, 136; *Prospectus*, pp. 6, 111; *Indian Usage*, p. 31.

[40] *View*, p. 7; *Prospectus*, pp. 132, 138–9, 141, 177.

[41] *View*, p. ii.

[42] *View*, pp. iv, 12, chh. II and III; *Prospectus*, p. 11; *Letter*, p. 9.

[43] *Indian Usage*, pp. 6, 21 and *passim*.

[44] This is the burden of *Indian Usage*, summarized at pp. 361–2.

[45] *Prospectus*, pp. 64–66, 79. Nelson would prefer the Abbé Dubois as an authority on the South.

[46] *Prospectus*, p. 80.

William Jones,[47] Colebrooke,[48] and enthusiasts of that period. His own experience in the Districts convinced him that it was ludicrous to apply the *dharmaśāstra* law to people utterly unsuited to it, and he was dissatisfied with the High Court for its reluctance to permit customs to be proved in derogation of the so-called Hindu law.[49] To make matters worse 'schools of law' had been invented, with the result that the 'speculative treatises' to which Nelson objected so strongly were rigidly confined in their operation within certain arbitrarily determined geographical bounds.[50]

Nelson urged that the Government should set up a Commission[51] to find out how much of the *dharmaśātra* law was in fact followed by the public: he suspected that only some among the Brahmans would be found to follow it and that to a small degree. The Commission should inspect the texts of alleged authority and determine which of them were forgeries[52] and which reliable and to what extent.[53] When it had done its work with the texts an inquiry should be instituted into the customs actually observed in every caste, and the results should be incorporated in a Manual, which the Courts would be obliged to consult in deciding cases.[54] The burden of proof of custom would be lightened and shifted on to the party to deny a custom found in the Manual: this would be cheaper and more just than the present system.[55] In all this work there can be little doubt that Nelson had originally visualized himself playing a leading role.[56]

Again, he observed that the greater part of the rules of the *dharmaśāstra* turned out to be restrictive, to the prejudice of natural liberties and inclinations, contrary to the greater part of the customs of which he had personal knowledge; and therefore he recommended a short enabling Act[57] allowing individuals to consult their own inclinations in matters of marriage, divorce, succession, etc. He based his contentions upon fifteen 'false principles'[58] to which the Madras High Court had committed itself, and upon certain true principles[59] which he thought ought to be law. In the very last resort he recommended (in 1887) that the living part of the *śāstric* law should be ascertained and codified[60]—in so doing he anticipated the act of the Indian Parliament which, after about a century of denials of the possibility or desirability of such a remedy, has commenced[61] to codify the Hindu law in desperation, the confusion and uncertainties of which Nelson complained having become steadily worse from his day to ours.

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[47] Ibid., pp. 11–12, 43.

[48] *View*, p. 97; *Prospectus*, p. 79.

[49] *Madura country*, Pt. II, p. 88; *View*, pp. i, 2, 30–3, 114–18, 131, 134–5; *Letter*, pp. 23–4, 42–3; *Prospectus* and *Indian Usage*, passim.

[50] The first 'false principle': *View*, pp. 18, 21 ff.; *Letter*, p. 32; *Prospectus*, p. 55 (an 'old wives' tale'); *Indian Usage*, pp. 11, 16, 179 ff., 255.

[51] *Madura country*, Pt. II, p. 88; *Prospectus*, p. 186; *Letter*, pp. 44–5; *Indian Usage*, p. 17.

[52] Cf. *Prospectus*, pp. 37 and ff.

[53] Ibid., p. 194.

[54] Ibid., pp. 190 ff. He further recommended that marriages, adoptions and partitions should be compulsorily registered and that the status and responsibility of *gurus* and heads of castes should be revived under proper supervision and encouragement.

[55] *Indian Usage*, p. 199.

[56] *View*, p. 30; *Prospectus*, p. 186, and *Letter*, p. 44, are very suggestive of this.

[57] *Prospectus*, p. 182; explained in *Letter*, p. 21.

[58] Set out in ch. II of the *View*. Mostly technical, they vary greatly in practical importance.

[59] Ibid., ch. III.

[60] *Indian Usage*, pp. 19–20; foreshadowed in *View*, p. 14.

To Nelson's recommendations there were certain valid objections of no little weight, though they could, with firm-mindedness, have been overcome: it is not necessary to discuss them in this paper.

The Probable Truth of the Matter

Nelson's contemporaries were very willingly misled by the vehemence and oddity of some of his arguments into the belief that he was really wrong. At this stage, after the valuable publications of Jha, Kane, Sen-Gupta, Rangaswami Aiyangar, Gharpure, Varadachariar and a host of minor contributors, we are in a better position to assess the truth of his main contention that they were. It seems certain that the law of the Sanskrit books was applied only to those castes which professed orthodoxy, though certain of its general principles would have been applied where caste custom could not be proved, or in matters of procedure. The law of the *dharmaśāstra* rested upon the only jurisprudence which India knew before the Muslims came, and was the only one ever applied to Hindus. The method of application was not strictly comparable with administration upon European lines and the attempt at comparison based upon such an assumption was doomed to failure. But the definition of 'Hindu', about which Nelson and his contemporaries had so much trouble, did not bother medieval jurists, who thought that local and caste customs were always to be applied in practice and who denied, except in special instances, that any one law was to be applied to the whole population of any single *dēśa*.

The Bombay and Madras High Courts, however, followed the example of Bengal, where the tradition of study of Sanskrit legal texts was in the 1780's stronger than anywhere else, except possibly Benares (but this is not certain), and was a much more genuinely integral part of the people's heritage. They decided to apply the law derivable from the few texts they then had at their disposal to all who could not prove that another law was applicable. And thus dozens of customs were, from the legal standpoint, steam-rollered out of existence. Innes was well aware of this and actually applauded it.[62] The promoters of the Hindu Code have observed the same effect of the British administration of justice in India, and have thought it consistent with progress and morality. Indeed they have gone further than even Innes would have dreamed possible, and in the Hindu Succession Act passed by the Indian Parliament in 1956 even the notoriously peculiar laws of succession of Malabar were all but abolished for the sake of 'manageable uniformity'.

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[61] Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

[62] *Examination*, pp. 103, 110; sharply criticized by Nelson, *Letter*, p. 44, and *Indian Usage*, pp. 6–8.

Nelson's Methods

He relied principally upon the following series of arguments: (i) one cannot define 'Hindu law' except as the law which ought to be administered to Hindus;[63] (ii) this cannot be the law of the *śāstra*, except in the case of true Hindus, for the *śāstric* law is a blend of religion, law, and morality;[64] (iii) since the greater part of the population of South India are devil-worshippers or heretics it would appear that the *śāstra* is applicable to a very small minority;[65] (iv) that minority must consist of the Brahmans, many of whom are foreigners recently domiciled in Madras and thus presumably governed by a set of customs which, as an import, has not had time to affect non-Brahman castes to any appreciable extent, while the rest are puny specimens having nothing in common with their alleged fair-skinned Aryan ancestors for whom the *śāstra* was originally invented;[66] (v) even admitting that the *śāstra* is applicable in the case of some Brahmans in some matters, it is not applicable as binding law, since the books are really collections of advices, exhortations, etc.;[67] (vi) even admitting that some true Vaiśyas and Sūdras[68] survive in Madras, the *śāstra* is not applicable to the latter, since Manu and other *smṛti*-writers wrote only for the twice-born castes;[69] (vii) and finally there is no obligation on the Court to apply the texts to anyone since these were never promulgated by a political superior,[70] there were no regularly-constituted law-courts before the British period and indeed no law as such.[71] Hence the High Court must look elsewhere for its authority, and this can only be to the actual usages of the people, whatever their complexion from the point of view of foreign moral prejudices.[72]

These arguments were based upon literary sources,[73] on observation and observers' reports,[74] and upon the inferences drawn from a comparison of such material. His technique lay chiefly in raising hypotheses upon the basis of a substantial doubt, and then calling upon an antagonist to show that the hypothesis was unfounded; such hypotheses were ranged in depth, so that even if the 'facts' supporting one were knocked away a number of others remained to take the weight, and he grew indifferent to the collapse of individual inferences. This led to a certain recklessness, which did not fail to attract attention,[75] but it is a mistake (as suggested above) to assume that the collapse of many of his 'proofs' invalidates his principal arguments.

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[63] *View*, pp. ii, 2; *Letter*, p. 42; *Prospectus*, p. 4.

[64] *Prospectus*, pp. 104–5; *Indian Usage*, p. 53.

[65] *View*, pp. i, iii, 6, 11, 140, 151–2, 153; *Prospectus*, pp. 39 and ff.

[66] *View*, p. 5.

[67] *Indian Usage*, p. 31.

[68] *Madura country*, Pt. II, p. 12; *View*, p. 5.

[69] *Indian Usage*, p. 31.

[70] *View*, pp. 2–3; *Prospectus*, p. 54.

[71] *Madura country*, Pt. III, p. 170; Pt. IV, p. 68; *View*, pp. 3, 23; *Hindu law in Madras in 1714*, pp. 7, 9. 11, 17; *Prospectus*, p. 162; *Indian Usage*, p. 47.

[72] *Indian Usage*, pp. 16–17.

[73] (i) Vedic material; (ii) *smṛtis*; (iii) commentaries and digests; (iv) travellers' and missionaries' reports; works of orientalists such as Caldwell, Anquetil Duperron, Max Müller, Weber, etc., and legal historians and ethnologists such as Maine and Morgan.

[74] His work for the *Madura country*, Ward's *Survey Account* and Cornish, *Madras Census Report* (1871). Personal knowledge of incidents and a reference to a recent autobiography are put to good use: *View*, p. 91, *Prospectus*, p. 142; *Indian Usage*, p. 11.

Before dealing with his research-technique in special relation to his chosen topic we should observe how he tackled his *Madura country* which in a sense laid the foundations for his subsequent work. He followed the contemporary practice of using slight or vague documentation, and some references are tantalizing.[76] In the absence of efficient epigraphical collections (Sir Walter Elliot's collection remains unpublished to this day;[77] Ellis's work was too sporadic[78] and the collection of Col. Colin Mackenzie was too recondite to be of assistance) Nelson had to rely for early history on legendary material, recent Tamil compilations, occasional inscriptions[79] and the pitiful contents of Taylor's and Wilson's Catalogues of the Mackenzie Collection. His modern period is much fuller and dramatically written up. Foreign observers, particularly Jesuits,[80] are heavily though by no means uncritically relied upon, as well as records found in the Madura Record Office. For the ethnological section he relies partly on personal inquiry and partly upon prior records of custom such as the valuable (but apparently untraceable) Survey Account written by Lt. (subsequently Captain) Ward.[81] His only originality seems to have been in his categorization of castes—he does not bother much with those which are not *respectable* unless they have very queer customs[82]—and his suggestion as to the origin of the Right Hand–Left Hand rivalry.[83] His studies left him with a strong impression, reinforced with the years, of the virtual non-existence of law (as he defined it) before the British period, of the utter incompatibility of Tamil customs by and large with the *śāstra* (polyandry and incest,[84] and retributive challenge-murders[85] particularly interested him) and of the public ignorance of and indifference towards the text-books which the High Court Judges solemnly pronounced 'infallible authorities'.[86]

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[75] Not merely from Innes or a careful critic like Mayne (preface to his third edition) but also Barth, quoted *Indian Usage*, pp. 22–23. Nelson actually promised early in his last book to amend in accordance with this criticism!

[76] Documentation in reference to customs is particularly missed. References to current and earlier literature are usually vague, e.g. to Jolly in *Indian Usage*, p. 11; Rogerius in *Prospectus*, p. 140.

[77] This is a splendid collection of Deccan inscriptions which, though suffering from certain faults in transmission of the texts, will never lose its value: R.A.S. (three volumes—one in manuscript and two lithographed). His historical work consists of an article in the *J.R.A.S.* for 1837 and six manuscript volumes in the I.O.: MSS. Eur. D. 324–7, 329.

[78] See note 29 above.

[79] *Madura country*, Pt. III, pp. 56–7, 67–9.

[80] The *Mission du Maduré*; Bouchet is repeatedly used, also Freire and Martinz.

[81] This document was compiled in (?) 1824. *Madura country*, Pt. II, pp. 33, 81; *View*, p. 141.

[82] Cf. treatment of Tottiyans (Pt. II, p. 81) with that of Kunnuvans (ibid., p. 34).

[83] *View*, p. 140.

[84] *Madura country*, Pt. II, pp. 35, 54, 82; *View*, p. 144.

[85] *Madura country*, Pt. II, 52–3; *Prospectus*, p. 165. He made the very sound observation that such customs directly indicated the absence of law (in the European sense) in the societies in question, or at the very least an absence of a legal sense.

Even in the *View* he shows little originality. But he puts the works of Max Müller, Weber and others to uses for which their authors, had they our present knowledge, would have been glad to disclaim responsibility.[87] Goldstücker[88] and Burnell[89] cannot however escape responsibility for certain untrustworthy statements of a speculative character, upon which Nelson, having no means of discriminating between the wheat and the chaff, sometimes fastened eagerly.[90] Sir Thomas Munro seemed to be a reliable authority.[91] A Judge of the High Court had once expressed a view similar to his own and upon this he repeatedly relied.[92] His original interpretation of a passage in the *Mitāksharā* did not achieve much support,[93] but was necessary to make it harmonize with his view that even the 'authorities' if read aright would support his conclusions. The customs of the people were analysed and the older texts were found to be in substantial agreement with them—the inference was obvious, that the later digests were to be suspected.[94] In his last book he took the view that the very latest digest, Halhed's Code, might be more reliable than any authority, since it proceeded from responsible jurists who knew what practice was.[95] In his search for information about pre-British legal practice he searched through every known traveller and sojourner in India: Greek, Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish, Dutch, French, and so on up to Buchanan.[96]

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[86] *View*, p. 113.

[87] In particular for the theories regarding a (non-existent) Mānava school of law, for the theory that different clans followed different legal principles, and for the whole (irrelevant) picture of *śākhās* and *caraṇas* of which Nelson made constant use. Even Jolly erred in undervaluing the authority of commentaries and digests, and thus misled Nelson. When the old scholars left the path of description for that of speculation their guesses were the best then available, and Nelson had a perfect right to follow them; but the result was often most unfortunate.

[88] Goldstücker, whose attack on the current administration of the Hindu Law was that of an outraged orientalist, often overstepped the mark, though he was as often technically correct. When he denied the existence of the concept of survivorship (*View*, p. 100) he was boxing with shadows, and led Nelson astray.

[89] Burnell thought that there was little difference between the *Mitāksharā* and the *Dāyabhāga* (*View*, p. 21); that there never was a Karṇāṭaka kingdom (ibid., p. 25); that the *śastra* knew no partial partitions (ibid., p. 110); that non-Brahmans were not contemplated in the *śastra* (ibid., p. 118); that digests were not faithful repositories of the *śastra* (ibid., pp. 132–3); and that 'Manu' lived about A.D. 400 or 500 (*Prospectus*, p. 36 n. 3).

[90] He acknowledged that this had been a mistake in some cases: *Indian Usage*, p. 22.

[91] Nelson refers to him with approval in *Indian Usage*, p. 17, but criticizes him elsewhere.

[92] Holloway J., in 6 M.H.C.R., p. 310.

[93] *View*, pp. 71 ff.; also p. 40, cf. *Letter*, p. 16.

[94] *Prospectus*, p. 87.

[95] *Indian Usage*, pp. 101–2, 129–30. His earlier remarks on it had been uncomplimentary: *Hindū Law in Madras*, p. 215; *Prospectus*, p. 13.

[96] He is equally happy using Megasthenes, Fa Hian, Marco Polo, Rogerius, Bernier and Faria y Sousa. Talboys Wheeler's material on Madras at least might almost be placed in the same category. Mandelslo (who strikes the present writer as a not very obvious source) was also relied upon. He even refers to Camões; and where the latter states that the Devil had written laws for the Indians Nelson comically remarks, 'What did he allude to?' (*Prospectus*, p. 44).

He referred to Ceylon, where the laws of the Tamils[97] and the Khandyans[98] had been established upon the basis of inquiries into actual customs. He confessed ignorance of the positions in French and Portuguese India[99]—both would have helped him considerably, for the authorities there had in different ways anticipated his recommendations.[100] In Bombay a catalogue of customs had been compiled by Borrodaile[101] and another by Steele.[102] In the Punjab local customs were the basis of decision unless challenged.[103] And we may add incidentally that thirty years after Nelson's death (1898) official recognition was given to a collection of customs of the Khasis and other inhabitants of the foothills of the Himalayas,[104] which until recently formed the basis of decisions relative to their family law. Shortly before the Second World War an officer[105] was specially deputed to inquire into and record the customs of the Santals, who had been complaining of their having been subjected to the Hindu law by the High Court at Patna: his survey was completed, but political events and the trend of opinion among the influential classes since Independence prevented practical application of the result. We can see that precedent and subsequent example alike bear witness to the practicability of Nelson's chief recommendation. And whilst deploring the effect of precedent in the establishing of a false or artificial Hindu law at Madras[106] he was lawyer enough to rejoice at a helpful analogy.

Nelson's chief fault was not his undue reliance upon orientalists and law professors[107] whose dicta could not support the use to which he put them, nor his tendency to over-dramatize the injustice he felt and the intellectual dishonesty which he quite accurately detected, but that he was insufficiently learned in the Anglo-Hindu law itself. He neither studied intimately all the case-law,[108] nor read carefully the available Sanskrit law books in translation.[109] His predominant scepticism prevented him from delving deeply into the very learned books of West and Bühler[110] and of Mayne, which were not infected with all the faults he had found in the despised earlier text-books.[111] It similarly prevented him from discovering the exact limits of the weakness he was attacking. He attempted, after the débâcle of 1882, to repair this want, more cases were studied, the *smṛtis* were more earnestly searched through[112] and even drama[113] and erotics[114] were investigated to obtain further light on the nature of law in the ancient civilization.

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[97] The *Tesawalamai. Prospectus*, pp. 19, 122, 124.

[98] *Indian Usage*, p. 190. Whereas the Tamils of Ceylon did acknowledge a group of texts as their jurisprudential authorities (few people even knew their names, but no matter), the Kandyans had no legal literature of their own until about 1825, and this made the course of the Board of Commissioners very much plainer—they were bound to decide cases according to the opinions of Kandyan Assessors until a body of customary law had been built up out of decided cases and the memoranda of British Commissioners.

[99] *Prospectus*, p. 134 (cf. p. 151).

[100] When the French set up the Comité Consultatif de jurisprudence indienne their intention was to establish the Hindu law by reference to a committee representative of all castes and not merely to a small committee of Pundits. In this manner texts were considered (though not widely at first) but the decisions invariably reflected current custom among the Tamils. In Portuguese India law was administered to the Hindus according to a Foral compiled in the sixteenth century entirely by inquiry into local custom.

[101] West and Bühler, *A digest of Hindu law* (third edition), p. vii.

[102] *Prospectus*, pp. 19, 129–30.

[103] *Prospectus*, p. 19; *Indian Usage*, p. 17. The modern authority is Rattigan.

[104] Panna Lall, *Hindu Customary law in Kumaun*. This supplements and to some extent corrects the private venture of L. D. Joshi, *The Khasa Family law* (Allahabad, 1929), to which the Allahabad High Court accorded particular authority.

[105] Mr. W. G. Archer.

[106] *Prospectus*, p. 183 n. 2.

[107] In particular Max Müller, Weber, Duperron, Goldstücker, Burnell, Maine, Hearn and Austin. Nelson's adoption of the definition of law promulgated by the last was particularly unfortunate.

But it is most unlikely that, even if he had made a very thorough examination of the suspected authorities at the beginning, and had thus been able to make out a more patient and more accurate case, he could have brought about a reversal of the policy of the judiciary. The Privy Council had confirmed the obnoxious decisions too often, and without statutory aid the High Court could not cut itself free even if it wished to do so. The Legislature could not have restored the place of custom without abandoning the policy of gradual judicial reform in favour of uniformity and 'better' morality. The Anglo-Hindu law was thought to be good for Hindus and those nominal Hindus who objected to it, and who would not escape from it by conversion to Christianity, would be improved by being subjected to it. In this view the new Hindu intelligentsia came to agree with the Judges, and Nelson's arguments ceased to have any practical appeal even to the Madrassi Hindu.

Though C. P. Brown and A. C. Burnell find a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography* Nelson is omitted. He is not mentioned in Hutchinson's *Catalogue of Notable Middle Templars*,[115] though perhaps this is not surprising as his career would hardly fire the imagination of a practitioner, to whom such out-and-out scepticism would be anathema. Yet Nelson's contribution to Indian legal and social history and historiography ought not to be forgotten.

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[108] This is evident from the *Examination*.

[109] His acquaintance with the *Smṛti-candrikā* (trs. Kristnasawmy Iyer, Madras, 1867), with the *Vyavahāra-mayūkha* and the *Vivāda-cintāmaṇi* was hardly better than superficial.

[110] See note 19 above.

[111] *Prospectus*, p. 11.

[112] Particularly Manu and Nārada (in Jolly's translation). He was well acquainted with the law books translated in the Sacred Books of the East series.

[113] The *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, relied on by Innes, was closely scrutinized.

[114] Kāma-sūtra of Vatsyāyana.

[115] London, 1902.

27. WRITINGS ON THE MUTINY

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To the average Britisher the Mutiny came as a surprise and a shock. The first reaction was one of anger and inquiry. The inquiry was not necessarily dispassionate and anger led to animadversion. It was quite natural that many of the early writers should not wait for a patient search and critical assessment of source-materials, and pamphlets should pour in before the first year of the Mutiny was over. Most of the pamphleteers preferred to remain anonymous but there were among them a few Indians. The pamphleteers had their pet theories. The army men naturally attributed the Mutiny to military causes, lack of discipline in the Bengal army, bad manners of the young officers, their love of oriental luxury, over-centralization of authority and so on. But the Bengal officer could not agree with the Bombay man and Hunter controverted the thesis of Jacob. There was the evangelist, and we must not forget that evangelism was not confined to the professional missionary and had its adherents among the civil and military servants of the Company—he attributed the disaster to the godless character of the government. From the pulpit and the platform he announced, like the prophets of old, that the wrath of God had fallen upon those who, in their impiety, had denied Him. Others found fault with the extreme commercialism of the government that sacrificed everything else for the sake of a high dividend. The politicians found fault with the ultra radicals who rashly tried to put too much new wine in a thin old bottle. Some of the Indian pamphleteers complained against British practice which did not conform to the traditions of their country. In every country, in every age, a crisis sets pamphleteers busy diagnosing the disease and prescribing remedies. The Mutiny was no exception. But the publication that gained the widest circulation and caused the greatest sensation was the *Red Pamphlet*. The author described himself as one who had served under Sir Charles Napier and dedicated his work to Napier and Ellenborough. His identity, however, was no secret. Col. G. B. Malleson, a historian of repute, had under the veil of anonymity launched a violent attack, not only on Dalhousie and his favourites but on Canning and his advisers as well. His pamphlet was published in two parts, the first part was published in 1857, the second in the year following. A pamphlet seldom attempts an exhaustive analysis of a complex problem, but Malleson tried to give an up-to-date account of the Mutiny. He was, however, carried away by his feelings and ignored all the canons of historical investigation. His strong denunciation of Canning and Birch was not unexpected, though unfair, but people expected from a historical writer of his standing at least accuracy of facts, if not balanced judgement. But he did himself gross injustice when he accepted all current stories as authentic information. An apt illustration of his uncommon credulity and lack of care is to be found in his account of Dhondupant Nana. He seriously states that Dhondupant was a son of Ramchandra Pant Subadar. This was probably a pardonable error, for Ramchandra Pant's son, Narayan Rao, also went by the name of Nana. But his assertion that Nana had never been adopted by Baji Rao, that he could read and write English, that he got possession of Baji Rao's property by means of a forged will, has no foundation whatsoever. It is no excuse that Malleson was at Calcutta at the time, for there were many officers at Calcutta who knew the facts of the case. Another well-known personage who took upon himself the task of keeping his friends and, through them, the British public informed about the progress of the Mutiny was Rev. Dr. Alexander Duff. Duff was not a pamphleteer in the strict sense of the term but his letters to Dr. Tweedie served the purpose of small leaflets. These letters in due course appeared in the newspapers and were later published in book form. Duff was a man of unimpeachable character, and would never give currency to what he knew to be false. But his son was in the danger zone. A father's natural anxiety, a Britisher's disapproval of an armed rising against the persecution of his brothers in faith, and, above all, the Government's apathy, or what appeared as such, to the propagation of Christianity, blinded the good man to the necessity of scrutinizing the current news, and he honestly communicated to his friends as reliable information all that he heard about the Mutiny, irrespective of their sources. The result was that in 1859, just a year after the publication of *The Indian Rebellion, its Causes and Results*, Edward Lecky found it necessary to expose Duff's inaccuracies in his *Fictions connected with the Indian Outbreak of 1857*. Yet Duff was in close contact with Indian public opinion and his review of the Indian attitude towards the alien rulers deserves all respect.

With the progress of the Mutiny the demand for correct information steadily increased at home, and partly in response to this demand and partly as a result of the Britisher's ingrained habit of writing diaries and keeping journals, a considerable mass of literature was produced which may be divided into three groups: (1) Personal reminiscences of civil and military officers; (2) Correspondence of officers with their friends and relatives; (3) Diaries and journals kept mostly by the besieged at Lucknow. Besides these we come across a publication of an entirely different character and of unequal historical value. *The Annals of the Indian Rebellion* was published in 1859 from Calcutta in monthly instalments (from May to November 1859 the instalments appeared punctually every month but later there were longer intervals). It did not attempt a connected account of the Mutiny but presented to the subscribers such source materials as could be collected from Parliamentary papers, official reports, newspapers, etc., without any editorial note whatever. The collection is naturally of unequal value but the *Annals* brought together many narratives not easily available now. Delafosse's account of the siege and massacre of Kanpur, first published in the columns of a newspaper now defunct, has been preserved here. Prof. Ramchandra's narrative of his flight from Delhi, Munshi Mohanlal's account of his escape, have been included in the *Annals*. But with the authentic materials have been mixed up many statements which must be rejected as useless. The *Annals*, however, does not fall under the category of historical writings though it helps to check the accuracy of real historical works. But the years 1858–9 saw some full-fledged histories of the Mutiny. It is not possible nor necessary to give here an exhaustive list. *The Indian Mutiny*, by a former editor of the *Delhi Gazette*, went through three editions by 1858, but when a man of Malleson's scholarship and reputation threw all caution to the winds other anonymous writers could not be expected to be more careful. They catered for the morbid spirit of the times by retailing horror stories of all sorts. The quondam editor solemnly tells his readers that a man called Sanders tried to murder Nana. He was nailed to the ground and his nose, ears, fingers, and toes were chopped off. Next day the work of mutilation was continued until death relieved the poor victim of his unutterable agonies. Similar or worse stories found a place in other anonymous publications like *The Revolt in India* and the *Narrative of the Indian Revolt*.

The reminiscences were more reliable, for the authors mostly limited themselves to their personal experience, and even the brief narratives of the campaigns, that military officers wrote at their leisure, throw important light upon the psychology of the times. Some of them rose above the prevailing passion and took an objective view of things. William Edwards, Magistrate and Collector of Budaun, and later Judge of Benares, who had, like many of his brother officers, to run away from his headquarters, has left a graphic account of his flight from Budaun to Fatehgarh and thence to the fort of Dharampur, the residence of a friendly zemindar, Hardeo Baksh, whose loyalty was later rewarded with the title of Raja and an addition to his lands. In his *Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion*, Edwards tells us how old feuds were revived in the countryside with the collapse of the Government, how he came across armed parties of villagers lying in wait for their hostile neighbours, who, however, not only left the fugitive Magistrate strictly alone, but gave him whatever information he wanted. His account incidentally explains the difficulties of friendly zemindars. Hardeo Baksh was not in a position to defend his fortified residence against the strong rebel force of Fatehgarh, he had to send away his guests to an inaccessible swamp where even the ordinary comforts of an Indian village were not available. The sincerity of other chiefs who thought it unsafe to accommodate fugitives at their own residence had sometimes been questioned. Edwards' own experience shows that when they suggested more remote and less accessible places of refuge, the seemingly unsympathetic zemindars were not always guided by considerations of self-preservation only. In a privately circulated pamphlet, entitled *Facts and Reflections Connected with the Rebellion*, Edwards says that among all classes of Indians there was a deep and unmistakable feeling of sympathy with what they deemed the national cause and of a dislike of the British as a foreign and impure race. The villagers with whom Edwards lived were definitely of opinion that 'the Peshwa had been clearly right in attempting to throw off the power of the British, but that he had erred in cruelly killing women and children'.

Thornhill,[1] Magistrate of Mathura, on the other hand, clearly shows that in his neighbourhood representatives of old families, long out of possession of their hereditary villages, became guilty of rebellion by reviving their ancient claims. A rustic set himself up as a Raja who had no armed force to support his claims. He spent many months of enforced inactivity in the fort of Agra and his account of life there is illuminating in more than one sense. There was no friendly understanding between the civil servant and the military officer and the differences found expression in the treatment of their respective protégés. The average man was busy treasure-hunting and the intelligence department was in charge of a blind person. Official records, however, show that the blind person in question was a man of uncommon ability. Chaube Chanasyam Singh rendered distinguished service to the British cause and ultimately lost his life at the hands of the insurgents. When order was restored his family was richly rewarded and his brother was made a Raja. Wallace Dunlop in his *Service with the Khakee Ressalah* gives an account of the tribal feud in which the Jats and Gujars were engaged, and points out that the peace of the countryside was disturbed not so much by the mutineers, as by the elements of disorder let loose by the Mutiny. Dundas Robertson, Magistrate of Shaharanpur (*District Duties During the Revolt in the North-West Provinces of India*) gives similar accounts of the suppression of the criminal tribe of Banjaras, who were accustomed, even in normal times, to supplement their lawful income, derived from the carrying trade, by illegal earnings from theft and robbery. He paid glowing tribute to the Nasiri regiment of the Gurkhas who had caused a panic at Simla. Personal reminiscences cannot be altogether free from subjectivity. Thornhill's description of life in the Agra fort may have been coloured by his personal likes and dislikes. Robertson of Shaharanpur may have been influenced by his prejudices against the natives, but Taylor of Patna was frankly out to defend himself. While his numerous pamphlets cannot be ignored, if we are to understand properly the Patna crisis, his official critics, whose comments found less publicity, should also get a hearing. During the Mutiny, when feelings ran high, we cannot expect moderation or sweet reasonableness from aggrieved parties. Nor is it good logic that because the Wahabis were found guilty of treason ten years later, therefore it follows that they were contemplating treason in 1857. Sherer wrote in the calm of his retirement when much of the heat had cooled down and the cry for vengeance had ceased. He could therefore candidly acknowledge the kindness he experienced at Banda, and take an objective view of the troubles at Fatehpur. He knew Hikmatullah and he was aware that popular opinion held him guilty of Tucker's murder. Sherer argued that the Muslim Deputy Collector was psychologically incapable of any resolute action. 'I was afterwards at his trial, and think it exceedingly unlikely, both from his craven demeanour on that occasion, and from the testimony adduced, that he even took a prominent part in any active proceedings against the British.' But Sherer kept calm even when the Mutiny was at its height. When everybody was crying for Nana's blood, he could not find any evidence of his collusion with the sepoys before the actual outbreak of the Mutiny. But magistrates alone did not contribute to the Mutiny literature. Ladies also had their share in memoir writing. Mrs. Paget and Mrs. Duberly had personal experience of camp life and campaigns, for their husbands were in the army. Mrs. Coopland was a clergyman's wife. She was at Gwalior at the time of the outbreak. Her husband had asked her to leave the station for a safer place but she was reluctant to leave him alone. The Gwalior mutineers let the women go, but killed all the men they could lay their hands on. She later recorded the story of her flight and related how a faithful servant tried to save her and her husband.

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[1] *The Personal Adventures and Experiences of a Magistrate during the rise, progress and suppression of the Indian Mutiny.*

The Englishman was from the very beginning convinced that his was the right cause, the cause that God favoured, and it was this belief that sustained him in the midst of all his trials. J. E. W. Rotton was present with the Delhi field force. He published the *Chaplain's Narrative of the Siege of Delhi in 1858.* He devoutly believed that 'it was a battle of principles, a conflict between truth and error'. Whenever the rebels committed any serious blunder the Christian discovered God's hand in it. In this war, therefore, there could not be any compromise. No action was, under such circumstances, indefensible, and the matter of fact way in which Rotton, a clergyman, records how wounded prisoners were put to death and even native camp-followers were killed, illustrates the real character of the conflict. Eight wounded rebel gunners were killed, 'whom we left dead in the field, as there was no time either for giving or expecting quarter. As to prisoners of war, those we ever made, being comparatively few, we subsequently tried and destroyed; so that immediate death on battle-field must have been an infinitely better alternative.' This happened on the 20th June. On the 9th July a number of camp followers were killed by infuriated European soldiers. Rotton observes, 'I remember the authorities were very sensitive on this point, and I think very properly so; as life is not to be taken from any man without sufficient cause. But the disorder necessarily occasioned by the sudden appearance of an enemy in camp, and the ignorance of the fact in our men, that they were slaying friends not foes, are all sufficient excuses. It was one of the accidents of war, to be deplored but not to be helped.' Rotton was not the only clergyman to write about Delhi. Cave Browne's *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857* was published in book form in 1861, but his chapters had appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* three years earlier. To his credit it must be admitted that though he had no doubt about the righteousness of the British cause he did not burden his account with unfounded stories of sepoy atrocities. Even educated military officers believed in such reports and Bishop Wilberforce's son[2] sent home an account of children roasted in boiling oil.

Nothing illustrates better the Englishman's love of correspondence than the letters of Keith Young and Harvey Greathead; Keith Young's *Delhi—1857* was published long after the Mutiny and Greathead's letters appeared shortly after the author's death. Day after day, in spite of their onerous duties and heavy preoccupation, these two officers, one the Judge Advocate General and the other the Governor-General's Agent in the camp, sat down to inform their wives of events at Delhi and news from other centres. The letters were not meant for publication and faithfully represented the writers' opinions about their colleagues. But Keith Young was always on his guard not to let any official secrets carelessly out, and he took particular care not to frighten his wife or to cause a stir at Simla by sending any unhappy news. He therefore did not write about Sir Henry Lawrence's death or about the Kanpur massacre until the news had become public property. Harvey Greathead was less reticent. These correspondents do not make a hero of every British officer. We read of superseded seniors sulking in their tents and finally leaving the scene of operations, we read of cheering news of dissension in the enemy camp brought by watchful spies, we read of hopes raised by unfounded reports of approaching succour. These letters are first-class source-materials, but distinction has to be made between hearsay news and authentic facts. In fact the warning was wisely sounded by a young officer, serving under General Havelock, whose letters were published in 1894 under the title of *With Havelock from Allahabad to*

[2] *An Unrecorded Chapter of the Indian Mutiny.*

Lucknow. Lt. Groom wrote to his wife, 'you must not believe all you hear about anything, even when written by *me*, as every report is improved upon in camp'.

The letter-writers were not conscious that they were indirectly writing history, as their correspondence is not history in the sense in which we understand the term. But Mowbray Thomson[3] and Shepherd[4] deliberately set out to present an account of Wheeler's defence of the entrenchment at Kanpur. Thomson was one of the four survivors of the river massacre, and Shepherd had left the entrenchment three days before the tragedy. Delafosse, who was with Thomson, was the first to write an authentic account of the siege, surrender and subsequent massacre, but his narrative was all too brief. None of them had any notes and they all wrote from memory. Thomson made it clear that he thought it his duty to defend the memory of his deceased comrades against the tongue of calumny. If was natural that there should be some discrepancies between the accounts of Thomson and Shepherd. The most important one relates to provisions. Shepherd thought that when he left the camp on the 24th June there was a fortnight's provisions still left. Thomson was definite that the garrison was already on half ration and even at that rate provisions would not last for more than three or four days when Wheeler capitulated. Shepherd, as a clerk, was less likely to be in the know.

The gallant defence of the barracks was a fitting theme for an epic. The epic was written in prose by Sir George Trevelyan[5] in 1899. By then all heat should have subsided and self-righteousness should have yielded to self-restraint. If four witnesses survived the massacre of the 27th June, none of the prisoners lived to tell the tale of the killing of the 15th July. But Sir George brought to bear on his theme an inimitable literary style and vivid imagination and spun out of very flimsy material a horror story which surpasses anything in cold cruelty. He relies mainly on Nanak Chand's so-called journal which he accepted at its face value. He did not think it necessary to make any inquiry about this man's antecedents, though Sir John Kaye had summarily dismissed him as an untrustworthy witness. The very style of the journal betrayed its real character and Nanak Chanḍ candidly confessed that he kept the journal in order to prove his loyalty and to make a name. He makes no secret of his expectations of a reward, and official records prove that that hope was long deferred and never adequately fulfilled. But Nanak Chand was not the only shady character in whom Sir George Trevelyan put his implicit faith. He often quotes the evidence of Fitchett, a Christian drummer attached to the Sixth N.I. at Allahabad. He became a Muslim when the Mutiny broke out and accompanied his regiment to Kanpur. He was not the only apostate in the camp and few people in his position would have preferred martyrdom to life. But two of his comrades, Clarke and Decruz, roundly contradicted his statement that they were all confined in the Savada house from where they could see the garrison leave the entrenchment and the survivors of the massacre come to their temporary prison. Their evidence was that they were never in confinement but they had encamped in an open place about a mile from the Savada house. This contradiction did not go unnoticed by Sir John Kaye. Sir George Forrest went further and rejected all the depositions as those of men who had the noose round their necks. Sir George Trevelyan does not tell us why he accepted such evidence. We cannot dismiss his work as a fiction, for it claims to be sober history, but he yielded to the temptation of giving a colourful picture of the heroism and horror of Kanpur which certainly did not stand in need of over-painting.

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[3] *The Story of Cawnpore.*

[4] *A Personal Narrative of the outbreak and massacre at Cawnpore.*

[5] *Cawnpore.*

We have a more correct and more realistic account of the titanic struggle at Lucknow. Many of the besieged, men and women, soldier and civilian, kept a daily record of military and other events. No wonder that Mrs. Case's diary[6] tallies in many details with that of Lady Inglis,[7] for they were lodged in the same house. While Lady Inglis lost her journal off the Ceylon coast, some notes were kept and she had Mrs. Case's published journal before her when she put hers in the final form. All the journals tell the same story of heroic resolution and patient privations. Nothing testifies to the spiritual resignation of the sufferers better than these plain matter-of-fact accounts of the siege. The news of Kanpur had reached the besieged and more than one lady suggested that they should be justified in following the Rajput practice of suicide if the worst came. But there were brave spirits who scouted the idea as not in keeping with their faith. They placed themselves unreservedly in the hands of 'Him who knows what is best for us'. But there is a grey shade in this bright picture. At Lucknow the native soldiers were fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the Europeans and among the besieged there were Europeans from different countries. A valiant Frenchman fought side by side with an Italian and they were both of them trusted by their British commander. Unhappily the Indian soldier, without whose co-operation the defence could not be carried on for any length of time, was under suspicion and some of them were bayoneted when the relieving force arrived. But as adversity brings out the best in human character it also accentuates its worst propensities. If a private was prepared to stint himself in order to save a dog, one N.C.O. killed another, and Rees mentions a case of theft. Mrs. German records 'a row between the Padre and a lady, clerical victorious, and the lady going off into hysterics'. While there was daily prayer and hymn-singing, some diversion was offered at Dr. Fayrer's house by reading Scott's *Guy Mannering* aloud to the inmates.

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[6] *Day by Day at Lucknow.*

[7] *Siege of Lucknow, A Diary.*

Two of the besieged, however, have attempted a general history of the mutinies in Oudh. Martin Gubbins was a highly placed civilian and was in his public and private life not free from eccentricities. Sir Henry Lawrence did not see eye to eye with him and overruled his claims to succeed to the Chief Commissioner's office. As a historian Gubbins tried to be as objective as possible. His *Account of the Mutinies in Oude* appeared in 1858 and went through three editions within a year. He considered the annexation of Oudh a just measure but did not fail to make a distinction between the object of a policy and its actual effect and frankly admitted that the annexation shook people's confidence in British good faith. Being personally responsible for revenue administration in Oudh, he was naturally blind to its defects, but he was not unaware that revenue assessment in the North West Provinces and Rohilkhand was too high. He paid high tribute to the character and wisdom of Sir Henry Lawrence and subscribed to his opinion that Indians in the civil and military employment of the Company's government were badly underpaid in comparison with their confrères in the Native States. Nor was he unaware of the disaffection caused by such legislation as sanctioned social reforms like widow remarriage. But he failed where everybody else also failed. He could not explain why resistance became more widespread after the fall of Delhi and Lucknow and why sepoys who remained loyal during the worst days of the Mutiny changed their minds when the British cause was triumphant. To the first question General Mcleod Innes attempted an answer. He points out that when the siege of Lucknow began all but three of the principal Talukdars remained neutral. After the second retreat of Havelock, when things looked gloomy for the British, they sent their retainers to serve with the rebels, but did not take the field in person. When Canning's proclamation doomed all but a specified few to a general confiscation of property they became desperate and identified themselves completely with the lost cause. The explanation is well worth considering. The second question has not received any attention, for the outlook of the writers on the Mutiny had in the meantime undergone a change.

When the Mutiny broke out horrible stories of Sepoy barbarities reached England and there was a persistent cry for vengeance. The British officers carried sword and fire to remote villages, and men, women, and children fell victims to their fury, and the innocent and guilty suffered alike. To the credit of the British be it recorded that these misdeeds were also recorded by Englishmen. John Howard Russell reported acts of barbarism which caused a revulsion in decent society. Even British military and naval officers took sorrowful notice of the moral degradation caused by the war and felt very unhappy about the shameful conduct of some of their countrymen. Captain Jones[8] expressed his disapproval of adding psychological torture to physical penalty. Lt. Majendie[9] referred to a cruel incident which did little credit to the perpetrators. Benjamin Disraeli strongly condemned this deliberate deviation from civilized ways and said, 'I have heard things said and seen things written which would make me almost surmise that the religious opinions of the people of England had undergone some sudden change, and that instead of bowing before the name of Jesus we were preparing to revive the worship of Moloch.' Montgomery Martin, among the historians of the Mutiny, made himself the exponent of such feelings. In recent times others have laid stress on this aspect of the Mutiny.

But in spite of everything, the great majority could not help a feeling of triumph and exultation. A small island had reconquered a sub-continent. A microscopic minority of Britishers, fighting with their backs to the wall, had suppressed the concerted rising of an entire black nation. What could be more glorious? Does the history of the Greeks and Romans record anything more heroic? Should not achievements receive proper recognition and be presented to posterity in a fitting manner? The task fell to Sir John Kaye. Kaye was too honest a historiographer to ignore palpable flaws in his evidence but he wrote his *History of the Sepoy War* while most of his heroes were still alive. He missed the fact, which Innes emphasized, that it was a small British army, reinforced by a strong force of Indians, that beat the sepoys and their supporters, and in 1859 the sepoy had not even the advantage of superior numbers in his favour. He did not consciously suppress any fact which might discredit his heroes but he was ready to excuse their errors. Neill's superfine cruelty in making his victims lick the blood on the floor of Bibighar should be excused, pleaded Kaye, in view of the special circumstances of the case. Under Neill's orders prisoners condemned to death were daubed with cows' and pigs' fat prior to execution. Young subalterns sometimes not only delighted in such performances but defended them on the grounds that hanging was an ordinary punishment, extraordinary offences called for extraordinary penalties, and since Neill was a pious man Neill must have been right. The consequences of Neill's actions have never been critically examined by Kaye. He was not carried away by the grandeur and magnitude of his theme to the same extent as Sir George Trevelyan, but he also wrote an epic. Kaye did not live to complete his work and the task fell on Malleson, who did not share his moderation and agreed to undertake the work on the specific condition that he should retrace the ground covered by the third volume of Kaye. Malleson continued to be a partisan even when the veil of anonymity had been removed. He advocated the cause of Taylor, forgetting that Taylor had hanged nineteen men on evidence which was considered insufficient by the Sadr Court for imprisonment of others. The intellectual heir of Kaye and Malleson was T. Rice Holmes.[10] He aimed at writing the 'best history' of the Mutiny and in spite of his apparent efforts to be fair, he also stoops to special pleading when confronted by inconvenient facts. He argues that there was no evidence that the tallow with which the cartridge was greased consisted of cows' fat because responsible witnesses at the time did not specifically say so. What they said was that the tallow was what the contractor supplied and no extraordinary care had been taken to see that it was free from objectionable materials. He does not fail to refer to Neill's part in the Benares affairs but argues that the most competent people decided to disarm the Thirty-seventh N.I. The most competent people had earlier advised the evacuation of Benares and Holmes forgot that it is the business of the historian to sit in judgement over the most competent authorities. He did not gloss over the errors of Canning in the same manner. Judging from the volume of circulation the most popular work on the Mutiny is not Holmes's but Fitchett's.[11] But Fitchett did not write a history, his was a panegyric of British prowess, a Te Deum Laudamus for the victory the Lord had granted.

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[8] *Recollections of a Winter Campaign in India.*

[9] *Up Amongst the Pandies.*

Sir George Forrest[12] also was conscious of the epic character of his theme, but he was not as hard on the Pande as his predecessors had been and stressed the fact that there were good men as well as bad among the sepoys. His father was one of the gallant nine who exploded the magazine at Delhi on the 11th May. Sir Evelyn Wood[13] served in the Mutiny as a subaltern. Writing long after the event he tried to keep the balance even.

Indians wrote in an attitude of self-defence. Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyaya[14] compiled from newspapers and contemporary publications all the known cases of loyal co-operation. He has preserved for us the address presented to the Governor-General by the Indian aristocracy of Bengal. Kisori Chand Mitra[15] pleaded that the Mutiny was limited to the army and it should not stand in the way of liberal legislation. The most important Indian contribution to the writings on the Mutiny was that of Sir Syed Ahmed.[16] During its first phase the Mutiny was suspected to be a Hindu outbreak, but subsequently it was ascribed to Muslim conspiracy. A policy of divide and rule was adopted and discrimination was made between Hindus and Muslims in all matters. Sir Syed was an officer of unquestioned loyalty. He played a prominent part in negotiating with the rebel leaders who threatened Bijnor but his family suffered badly at the hands of the British troops after the reoccupation of Delhi. Sir Syed's analysis of the causes of the mutiny is both objective and impartial, but we perceive here the first indications of his future policy. He argues that if Muslims had not been placed in the same regiment with the Hindus they might not have gone astray. This is the Muslim counterpart of Kisori Chand Mitra's argument that the Hindu and Muslim interests were so contradictory that they could not be reconciled. Two narratives of the mutiny at Delhi by Indian writers were translated and published by Sir Theophilus Metcalfe.[17] Sir Theophilus did not live to see his translation through the press, and it suffers from some obvious mistakes. Mainuddin Hasan, one of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe's friends, pertinently pointed out that much of the troubles arose from the fact that the Englishmen forgot that they were foreigners in India. Jivanlal's was a day-to-day record of what he was told and not what he saw for himself. A Bengali clerk[18] attached to the Cavalry regiment at Barielly afterwards wrote an account of his personal experiences and it furnishes more information about the mutiny leaders of that place, whom the author personally knew, than is ordinarily available in official reports. A Maharashtra Brahman[19] was at Jhansi when the Mutiny broke out there. He was persuaded to record his experiences twenty-six years later. Naturally he was confused about his dates and facts, as he was long past the prime of his life, and wrote from memory without any notes. The best-known modern work on the Mutiny by an Indian is Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence*. There is no doubt that the Sepoys and their leaders wanted to get rid of the alien government and set up Hindu and Muslim rulers in their stead. But the author starts with a preconceived theory and chooses only such evidence as suits his purpose. He ignores inconvenient facts and like some of the early English writers makes much of the chapati and lotus. There is a tendency in recent times to discover a peasant revolt in the Mutiny. The Marxist interpreter makes too much of the Mutiny court at Delhi but fails to notice that its constitution vested the supreme authority in the King. A century has passed since the Mutiny. On no other topic of Indian history has so much been written. Leaving biographies out of account the known titles number about three hundred. Though old controversies still persist much of the bitterness has long since disappeared. The time has, therefore, come for a fresh inquiry into the causes, character and the results of the Revolt of 1857.

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[10] *History of the Indian Mutiny.*

[11] *Tale of the Great Mutiny.*

[12] *History of the Indian Mutiny.*

[13] *The Revolt in Hindusthan.*

[14] *The Mutineers and the People.*

[15] *The Mutinies, the Government and the People.*

[16] *An Essay on the Causes of the Indian Revolt.*

[17] *Two Native Narratives of the Mutinies in Delhi.*

[18] Durgadas Bandyopadhyaya, *Bidrohe Bangali.*

[19] Godse, *Majha Prabas.*

28. THE ADMINISTRATORS AND HISTORICAL WRITING ON INDIA

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This paper treats of the influence of the administrator on historical writing during the period of late nineteenth-century Imperialism (*c.* 1870–1905), when the Indian Civil Service stood at the height of its power. It deals exclusively with British officials since Indian officials like R. C. Dutt are better considered under the category of nationalist historians. The object of the paper has been to bring out what are considered to be the main assumptions of the writers of the period by the selective treatment of a few important figures, and the paper makes no pretence at completeness.

1. *The Popular Historians*

Most of the historical work of British administrators was written during their years of retirement in England, and as might be expected readily betrayed prejudices formed during a lifetime of official labour in the East. It was usually bluff, vigorous writing, meant only for home consumption, and avowedly intended to arouse public interest in Britain's Indian Empire or to defend it against the misrepresentations of sentimental liberalism. The literary form of any such writing designed to appeal to the ordinary reading public had long been determined. It was Macaulay on his return from India who had read the English mind aright, and realized that the one form in which the strange and unattractive subject of British-Indian history could be made palatable was that of biography. The Victorian public demanded of the historian not a knowledge of the past for its own sake but a demonstration of morality teaching by examples. It was convinced that the ascendancy of the small island-people of Britain throughout the world could only be explained in terms of the superiority of the British national character. The function of the historian, it was felt, was to inform and exhort by presenting the national character in its highest examples, and by narrating the lives of Britain's great men he was to demonstrate how individual character moulded history.

Macaulay was quick to see how the apparent contrast between the paucity in numbers and resources of the early Englishmen in the East and the magnitude of their achievement was a theme which could rescue

British-Indian history from its unpopularity. In his *Essay on Clive* he used India simply as a vast, shadowy, and magnificent background to give his central figure heroic proportions surpassing anything that was credible for a figure drawn against the more familiar and smaller European backcloth. To Clive's individual character he attributes the whole cause of British success. At the outset the English were marked by timidity and incapacity, and the French carried all before them; then 'the valour and genius of an obscure English youth turned the tide of fortune'. He shows Clive as first raising the morale of his countrymen by the inspiration of his deeds and personality, and then employing them to transform a small sepoy force into an all-conquering army. Again and again Macaulay employs the technique of contrast to point the moral of the constant superiority of character over mere numbers and size. He dwells on the numerical force and superior equipment of the 60,000 opposing Clive at Plassey to heighten the explanation of the victory. 'The force which he had to oppose this great multitude consisted of only three thousand men. But of these nearly a thousand were English; and all were led by English officers and trained in the English discipline.' . . . 'The confused and dispirited multitude gave way before the onset of disciplined valour.' This was the fare on which the Victorian schoolboy was bred, and Sir J. F. Stephen (Law Member, 1869–72) declared that he had read the essays on Clive and Warren Hastings so often that he knew them almost by heart.

Succeeding writers who aimed at the popular ear were bound by the terms of Macaulay's success. They had to treat British-Indian history largely in biographical terms and to use Indian subjects merely as background for the actions of a few Englishmen dominating the front of the stage. As a result British-Indian history tended to be reduced to a string of biographical studies dealing with military campaigns and the careers of successful pro-consuls. These limitations were well understood by the Delegates of the Clarendon Press when they commissioned Sir William Hunter in 1899 to edit a 'series of historical retrospects'. Under the general title *The Rulers of India* the series comprised twenty-eight short studies, each of which, at least in the intention of Hunter, 'takes some conspicuous epoch in the making of India, and, under the name of its principal personage, sets forth the problems which he had to encounter, the work which he achieved, and the influences which he left behind'. Hunter hoped that despite the concession to the popular taste by the adoption of the biographical form the series would exhibit a connected view of Indian history and to some extent reveal the laws governing its development. But his hope can hardly be said to have been realized. There is in fact no unifying theme cementing the series, and in the choice of subjects the popular passion for national heroes was allowed to outweigh considerations of historical completeness and proportion. A bare half-dozen volumes were devoted to Indian rulers; the remainder dealt with European and for the most part British figures of the nineteenth century. The failure to achieve even Hunter's limited aim is possibly shown in the fact that the series as advertised carried a sub-title of the historical phase each figure was intended to illustrate (e.g. *The Marquess Cornwallis* [*and the Consolidation of British Rule*]), but this sub-title was in most cases omitted from the title page of the book when it appeared. Half of the series was written by former administrators, the others by military writers including the well-known Captain Trotter and academic historians like S. Lane-Poole and H. Morse-Stephens.

In the writing of the administrators the didactic element was prominent. All tended to use their subject to inculcate some practical lesson, Sir Charles Aitchison commending low revenue assessments and John Lawrence's frontier policy, Sir Auckland Colvin and Sir H. S. Cunningham dwelling on the need for caution in the introduction of reforms and for constant vigilance and military preparedness which they believed were the supreme political lessons of the Mutiny.[1] But above all they strove to preach a moral sermon, to hold up the virtues of character which they believed had won for England her empire in the East and which could alone preserve it. 'Their actions blossom in the dust,' declared Colvin, 'yet the legacy of their lives is to be found in their character even more than in their achievements.' Sir Richard Temple prayed that the spirit of Thomason should be with every English recruit to the Civil Service, but it is noticeable that the old heroes Malcolm and Metcalfe found no place in the series, having been displaced by a galaxy of Mutiny heroes whose experience in preserving British rule was now presumably held to be more appropriate to the needs of the time. Cunningham is the spokesman of the new apotheosis. He feels compelled to speak of the Mutiny figures in hushed accents, 'with reverence, with gratitude, and with just and patriotic pride'; among so much in modern life that was vulgar, ignoble and commonplace they shone out distinct, he declared. In particular Cunningham gave the most complete expression to the view—present in a restrained form in Macaulay's *Essays*—that the principal importance of India was simply as a great stage where the English character could assume its most heroic form.

> 'India has added a thrilling chapter to the Englishman's national romance—a chapter which more, perhaps, than any other in our annals, abounds in interest and pathos—dark, tragic scenes, strange episodes—the success of splendid daring—the supremacy of the constant will over adverse fate. . . . It has been the arena in which the qualities which

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[1] Sir C. Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence* (1892). Sir A. Colvin, *John Russell Colvin* (1895). Sir H. S. Cunningham, *Earl Canning* (1891).

Englishmen most prize in themselves . . . have been exhibited on a grand scale—the iron will—the unwavering purpose—the practical aptitude for the management of human affairs—long enduring fortitude —devotion to duty—the generous contagion of self-sacrifice when courage glows into heroism, and the commonplace becomes sublime.'[2]

This approach is also to be seen in the larger works of popular authors, in, for instance, the prolific writings of Col. G. B. Malleson, who spent thirty-five years in India mainly in political employment. His chief books were the *History of the Indian Mutiny*, *History of the French in India* (1868), and *The Decisive Battles of India* (1883), as well as three volumes in the *Rulers of India* series. These longer and more formal works do not depart from the popular canon. Malleson's explanation of the British victory over the French in the eighteenth century goes back to the qualities of national character, but he reversed the judgement of Macaulay that everything was due to the genius of Clive. Clive was but a solitary leader of genius, whereas the French possessed four men of consummate ability, Dupleix, La Bourdonnais, Bussy, and Lally. Malleson found the secret to lie in the difference in character between the average Englishman and Frenchman serving their respective East India Companies. The ordinary Englishman 'showed numberless instances of the dogged character of the nation' and supported Clive with a high devotion to duty, but the Frenchman failed his brilliant leaders lamentably, as also did his compatriots in France.[3] Using the same hypothesis Malleson explained the British conquest of India in terms of the difference between the English and Indian character. Despite great qualities of intelligence, fidelity, and individual courage, there was a flaw in the Indian character which prevented the combination and unity necessary for successful political and military resistance. At the same time once this defect was supplied by British leadership Indians became a formidable military force and co-operated willingly and faithfully in the work of conquering their fellow-countrymen.[4]

2. *The 'Philosophic' Historians*

Historical writing by British officials fortunately did not confine itself to the popular level where national bias and political motive were openly and rather crudely expressed. Indian service happily attracted a few rare minds who brought the highest currents of European thought to play upon Indian problems, and who in their turn brought back ideas nourished by Indian experience into English intellectual life. Foremost among these were Sir Henry Maine, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Sir Alfred Lyall, and

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[2] Sir H. S. Cunningham, *Earl Canning* (*Rulers of India*, 1891), p. 7.

[3] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India* (1868), pp. 566–7.

[4] Malleson, *The Decisive Battles of India* (second edition, 1885), pp. 1–3.

Sir William Hunter. Generally speaking they were Liberal in outlook, but theirs was a liberalism of the intellect, standing for the application of trained intelligence to society, and they rejected the popular, sentimental, and demagogic liberalism associated with Bright and the later Gladstone. Stephen and Maine were among the leaders of revolt who carried the educated classes of England into opposition against Gladstone over the issue of Irish Home Rule. Their political convictions, confirmed by Indian experience, were in favour of strong government directed by high intelligence and governing by means of scientific laws fearlessly and efficiently administered. On returning to England from India Stephen published his *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873) in which he sought to show how force was an essential element in all government, even though held in reserve, and how the modern democratic state so far from being the haven of liberty and equality was in fact an all-powerful despotism in the hands of a gifted minority where each man had to submit to the fierce competition of a free economy. Stephen was a utilitarian who revived the high authoritarian tradition of Hobbes and Austin, and had also come under the influence in some degree of Maine's demonstration of the historicity of ideas and Darwin's law of natural selection. The result was a theory which asserted that the strongest always ruled, that the concentration of public force in modern society had become so great that men quietly submitted, and that the destructiveness of force coupled with the increase of wealth had led men into a system of settling most of their differences by counting heads instead of breaking them, even to a new ruling class overthrowing an old in this manner. He accepted the tenets of Bentham's legislative science but in view of the revolution of ideas effected by Maine's *Ancient Law* (1861) argued that the ideal of happiness changed from age to age as did the ruling group. If then, Britain had developed the highest ideal of social happiness and under Bentham's inspiration had devised the scientific instrument of law to enforce it, there was nothing to be ashamed of in the British record in India. Admittedly it was government by a minority resting on force, but all government was of this nature and the one distinguishing feature of India was the immense distance between the ideal of happiness held by the British rulers and that held by the mass of the people. Britain's function, like that of Rome, was to establish her own superior ideal of happiness by means of the framework of law. Only Britain could perform this task, and while she might suitably admit the modern-educated classes of India into a subordinate share of political office the supreme control had to remain British for all the foreseeable future. This gave British rule a firm moral basis, and the magnificent power it had established was entitled to all that reverence which Hobbes had declared was due to the great Leviathan. He was therefore incensed at the attitude adopted by the sentimental Liberals like Bright, who held that British rule was founded in violence and crime and was maintained by a fearful and intolerable concentration of power. Bright's teaching that the strong central authority should be broken up, and that the British should practise a policy of self-effacement until they could safely surrender their empire and so expiate their original crime, was to Stephen an unrealistic, unmanly, and immoral doctrine.[5]

Stephen was confronted, however, by the classic historical works on the rise of British rule which all cast their weight on the side of Bright's argument. Unfortunately Macaulay was among them. How had his boyhood-hero been so grossly misled? Stephen understood that Macaulay as a prominent Whig writing for the leading Whig journal, the *Edinburgh Review*, was bound in some measure to sustain the cause which the Whig party under Fox, Burke, and Sheridan had prosecuted in such an historic manner. Stephen's main explanation was that Macaulay's Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings were written simply as rather hasty magazine articles and not as deliberate history, and that Macaulay had been content to rely for his chief material on James Mill's standard work. He employed part of his leisure in retirement on correcting 'the accepted myth', and while at one time he thought of using his legal skill to analyse the whole impeachment of Hastings, he contented himself with the narrower theme of the trial and sentence of Nanda Kumar, which had formed one of the principal stains on Hastings' character. By exonerating Hastings on this charge Stephen hoped in some measure not merely to recover Hastings' reputation, but to set up the founders of British rule as men worthy of honour and reverence, since Burke had concentrated the whole indictment of misgovernment upon Hastings. Stephen was also prompted to some extent by the revival of interest in the case of Nanda Kumar due to the articles in the *Calcutta Review* of 1877 and 1878 written by Henry Beveridge (father of Sir William), later revised and expanded into a book entitled *Trial of Nanda Kumar: A Narrative of a Judicial Murder* (1886). Beveridge being a Radical member of the I.C.S. and a firm supporter of the Ilbert Bill and Indian self-government, the historical question thus formed part of the political battle in which Stephen was engaged. Stephen's *The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey* (1885) has the character of an exhaustive review of the evidence by counsel in an appeal trial rather than the literary character of an historical work. Nevertheless, it did a great deal to restore Hastings' reputation and all subsequent biographers borrowed largely from it and accepted most of its conclusions. Hunter in the official historical volume of the *Imperial Gazetteer* formally pronounced Hastings' complete acquittal on Stephen's authority.[6]

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[5] For Stephen's views, cf. Letters to *The Times*, 4 January 1878, 1 March 1883. Article: 'Foundations of the Government of India', *Nineteenth Century*, lxxx (October 1883).

[6] Sir W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire* (third edition, 1892), p. 457.

Stephen's friend, Sir John Strachey, was even more explicit in the avowal of the political motives prompting him to follow up Stephen's book. He sought to exculpate Hastings of the charges levelled by Burke (and accepted by Macaulay) in connection with the Rohilla War. In *Hastings and the Rohilla War* (1892) Strachey prefaced the text with a long extract from his book *India* (1888), the standard work on Indian administration for twenty years. Strachey complained that it was a serious misfortune for British rule that there was no accurate and complete history of British India which at the same time possessed the essential quality of literary excellence.

> 'Since the earlier part of the present century the old stories of the crimes by which the establishment of our power in India was attended have been passed on from one author to another. . . . These calumnies have caused and are still causing no little mischief both in England and India. Thousands of excellent people are filled with righteous indignation when they read of the atrocious acts of Clive and Hastings. . . . No suspicion of the truth reaches them that these horrors never occurred, and the fear can hardly be repressed that there may be some foundation even now for the charges of Indian misgovernment and oppression. Disparagement of their own countrymen has always been one of the common failings of unwise Englishmen. . . . They find in the supposed crimes of the founders of our Indian Empire an unfailing source of invective and obloquy. This false history is systematically taught by ourselves and believed by the educated natives of India to be true. It is impossible that this should not have a serious effect on their feelings towards their English rulers . . .'[7]

To Strachey 'the great criminal in the matter' was James Mill since he had misled Macaulay, and he declared that he could hardly express in moderate language his indignation at the misrepresentations, the suppression of truth, the garbling of documents of which he had found Mill guilty.

These two books of Stephen and Strachey were their only incursions into the field of Indian history. They differed from the popular school in that they aimed at the more educated reader and their work proceeded not simply from unexamined prejudice but from a reasoned and systematic political philosophy. Nevertheless, their ultimate teaching merely reinforced that of the popular writers. Since for Stephen and Strachey the framework of British rule was complete the structure had only to be held firm in strong, confident hands for it to complete its civilizing mission. The danger was that Englishmen would have misplaced moral qualms over maintaining a despotic rule and would lose their moral conviction in the validity of their position, and perhaps in a moment of weakness feebly surrender the burden of responsibility into the hands of the equally unrepresentative educated minority. And so Stephen and Strachey returned to the old lesson of character and moral exhortation. All would be well they believed if Englishmen continued to exhibit the qualities of their forefathers—'the masterful will, the stout heart, the active brain, the calm nerves, the strong body'.[8]

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[7] Sir J. Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War* (1892), pp. vi–vii.

Despite their hostility to James Mill, Stephen and Strachey shared his political outlook towards India. Neither had any appreciation of Indian culture or any real historical outlook on politics. They all believed in the forthright imposition of foreign rule and denied the need or practicability of winning over the Indian educated classes by political concessions, to co-operate in the civilizing mission. Sir William Hunter and Sir Alfred Lyall present a contrast in all these respects. Interested in Indian culture and religion, deeply affected by contemporary theories of history, and politically more Liberal, they feared the political dangers resulting from a rigid, unsympathetic attitude which ignored both the lessons of history and the strength of historical forces. They owed much to the influence and example of Maine, whose *Ancient Law* (1861) first effectively introduced the comparative historical method into English thought. It is necessary to study the full range of their ideas because they are the only names amongst the administrators who produced, albeit in meagre and incomplete form, genuine works of philosophic history which have stood the test of time. Hunter's *History of British India* (1899–1900) and Lyall's *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (1894) are products of fully developed historical theories, although these are not properly explicit in the works themselves.

Although they did not derive all their chief trains of thought from Maine, he is a useful subject of study as embodying the main intellectual currents of the time, and because although not strictly an historian he exercised a profound influence in forming an important historical view of Indian history. He introduced not merely the historical notions of Comte and Taine into the field of jurisprudence and the comparative history of legal institutions, but after his period as Legal Member in India from 1862 to 1869 he utilized the philological theory of Sanskrit as a member of an Aryan family of languages, together with von Maurer's work on the 'Aryan' institution of the German mark, to argue that the Indian village community was also an Aryan institution surviving in full vigour. India thus became 'the great repository of verifiable phenomena of ancient usage and ancient juridical thought' and in this way existing society in India could throw light on Europe's distant past. The result was not flattering to Indian self-esteem. The initial outcome of the revival of Sanskrit studies had naturally been to revise the contemptuous attitude towards Indian culture which had been adopted earlier in the century. Max Müller, settled in Oxford from 1850, could speak loosely of 'our Aryan brother', of the debt of Europe to the East without which it might have remained 'a barren and forgotten promontory of the primeval Asiatic continent', and of 'the spiritual relationship which now binds India and England together' as a result of the discoveries made in Sanskrit studies.[9] Amongst the educated classes of Indians a revived Hinduism had sprung into intellectual prominence, and a belief that India possessed a high standard of cultural civilization in its own right was fostered. Maine himself believed that the new notion of a common Aryan stock had the effect of abating national prejudices, and that 'the government of India by the English had been rendered appreciably easier by the discoveries which have brought home to the educated of both races the common parentage of Englishman and Hindoo'.[10] But Maine did not mean that India was in an advanced state of civilization; rather that she was not utterly alien and incomprehensible for her state was that of 'the infancy of the human mind prolonged, than a different maturity from that most familiar to us'. His view was that 'the primitive Aryan groups, the primitive Aryan institutions, the primitive Aryan ideas have been arrested in India at an early stage of development'.[11] He recognized the revolutionary manner in which British rule was beginning to transform Indian society but for the most part the only solid results were confined to the great coastal presidency towns and to a microscopic educated minority. There could be 'no greater mistake than to generalise from them as to the millions upon millions of men who filled the vast interior'. He did not hesitate to describe the condition of the vast majority as one of barbarism so long as this was understood to be 'a barbarism which contains a greater part of our own civilisation, with its elements as yet inseparate and not yet unfolded'. And the historical analogy for the present state of most of India was that of Europe in the early centuries of the Christian era. The result of the new intellectual influences was in this way rather to emphasize than diminish the gap between India and Europe, and this historical view provided for Maine, as well as Lyall and Hunter, a rational and dispassionate justification for the continued maintenance of British rule. For Maine the principle of progress, that is 'the continual production of new ideas', was not endemic in most societies but was the peculiar distinction of Greece. Yet it was a principle whose character was to spread like a contagion. A ferment spreading from this source had touched all the great progressive races of

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[8] Sir J. F. Stephen, Letter to *The Times*, 4 January 1878.

[9] Cf. Max Müller, 'Address to the International Congress of Orientalists', September 1874. *Chips from a German Workshop* (1880), iv, 333 et seq.

[10] Sir H. S. Maine, *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (fourth edition, 1885), p. 18.

[11] Sir H. S. Maine, Cambridge Rede Lecture 1875, *The Effects of Observation of India on Modern European Thought*. Also published in *Village Communities in the East and West* (third edition, etc., 1876, etc.), p. 220.

mankind, the Romans, the Germans, the French, and lastly the English. 'It is this principle of progress which we Englishmen are communicating to India. We did not create it. We deserve no special credit for it. . . . But we have received it, and as we have received it, so we pass it on. There is no reason why, if it has time to work, it should not develop in India effects as wonderful as in any other of the societies of mankind.' The note is different, the mind more dispassionate, its political solution for India more liberal; but its conclusion does not differ essentially from that of Stephen or the popular writers.

W. W. Hunter, who as a young official supplemented his income by journalism, was among the first to realize how the state of Indian society could be made interesting to the educated English reader by employing the new intellectual lights. His *Annals of Rural Bengal* (1868) was an attempt, he claimed, to give a fresh interpretation to Indian history. Hitherto the history of the British period had been presented in the form of 'biographies of the English Governors of India, not histories of the Indian people. The silent millions who bear our yoke have found no annalist.' He aimed to depict the historical growth of the peoples of Bengal, and then to trace the early effects of British rule on the state of society, for as a representative of the great administrative age of British rule he considered that the ordinary histories were far too much accounts of military conquest, whereas 'the permanent sources of the English ascendancy in Bengal have been, not their brilliant military successes, but deliberate civil courage and indomitable will'. Accepting the notion of a common Aryan stock he sought to explain why India had never developed strong nationalities like the Aryan races of Europe, a defect which had rendered foreign conquest by Muslim and European inevitable. He found the answer in the institution of caste, although this was not to be understood as the rigid artificial division conceived of by English statesmen, but a much more natural historical division, which had its basis in race and represented the distinction between the conquering Aryans and the aboriginal people. He traced the successive waves of Aryan migration into Bengal, and showed how cohabitation between the Aryan and aborigines had resulted in mixed castes. The refusal of the pure Aryan tribes to mix socially with the latter and their treatment of them as a helot class had prevented the growth of an homogeneous society with a common nationality. Shifting all manual labour on to the shoulders of the despised mixed castes the Brahmin class had grown slothful and effeminate and had been unable to resist conquest by successive waves of more vigorous peoples.

Before dealing with Lyall's much more elaborate and impressive historical theory it would be useful to note that the attempt to write philosophic history on the basis of the new knowledge derived from Sanskrit studies could result in conclusions just as prejudiced as those of James Hill more than half a century earlier. The most complete attempt was that of J. Tallboys Wheeler[12] who, between 1867 and 1876, published a *History of India from the Earliest Times* in five volumes. He set out, as did most of the administrator-historians, with the practical object of elucidating contemporary political problems by the light of India's past. Dividing the Hindu period into four historical phases which he names the Vedic, the Brahmanic, the Buddhist, and the Brahmanic revival, he attributes the failure of India to develop nationalities to the tyranny established by the Brahmani priesthood and the consequent withering away of all political loyalties.

> '. . . To all appearance the old Roman sentiment of devotion to the common weal, which is to be found amongst all Aryan nations, and which certainly appertained to the old Vedic Aryans, had passed away beneath the blighting influence of Brahmanical oppression; and the public spirit which animated the body politic in the Vedic age, and which is essential to the permanence of states and empires, seems to have been narrowed down to the caste, the village, and the family. The result has been that for ages the people of India have had but one political tie, one nationality, and one patriotism, that is religion, and religion alone '[13]

The result according to Wheeler was that every Hindu had for centuries moved in the fetters of religious superstition, his national life had ebbed away, and the country had 'only been saved from the most hopeless of anarchies by the introduction of European rule'. The conclusion was no different from that of Charles Grant or to a large extent of James Mill. Wheeler was no kinder to Muslim rule. To the Mughals he even denied the title of Muslim, calling them Sufi heretics or open infidels. By destroying the Ulema they had extinguished 'the one independent voice in the circle of Asiatic despotism'. European historians had been misled by the fulsome flattery of the parasitic court chroniclers, and the true character of Mughal rule was to be found in the writings of European observers like Bernier.

> 'Jehangir and Shah Jehan have been lauded as great and beneficent sovereigns. In reality they were the most shameless tyrants that ever disgraced a throne. Moghul administration has been held up as a model for British imitation. In reality it was a monstrous system of oppression and extortion which none but Asiatics could have practised or endured.'[14]

Wheeler's final volume on the British period was published separately from the main *History* under the title, *India under British Rule* (1886). A thin, unsatisfactory book, the preface sets out plainly the political lessons the book was intended to inculcate; that the acquisition of Bengal was not the work of ambition but an act of self-preservation, and that the peace of India could not have been maintained in any other way than by the establishment of British supremacy. The Mutiny was 'not a mere narrative of a military revolt, but a revelation of Asiatic nature'; so finally to a caution on the utter unreadiness of India for any type of representative government. The would-be philosophic historian ends in this way in the ranks of the most narrow and prejudiced Anglo-Indians.

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[12] Wheeler wrote his work in India during his office as Assistant Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, and later Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, British Burma.

[13] J. Tallboys Wheeler, *History of India* (1869), ii, 586–7.

[14] Ibid., vol. iv, part I (1876), p. xi.

The profoundest mind after Maine was that of Lyall, but owing to a constitutional incapacity for the labour required of a major work of philosophic history, his name is only known through his collected magazine articles, *Asiatic Studies* (first series 1882, second series 1889), and an expanded set of lectures, *The Rise and Expansion of British Dominion in India* (1894). These two works are alone sufficient, however, to give Lyall a high place among the historians of India. He set out to correct misconceptions about India which stemmed from false European analogies, or from study based solely on literary sources, for these misconceptions tended to suggest that India enjoyed a much higher level of political, religious, and moral life than she actually possessed. As a result the fundamental political problem of India was misunderstood. One popular notion was that in the establishment of British rule in India 'our conquests absorbed nationalities, displaced long-seated dynasties, and levelled ancient nobilities'. These were some of the self-accusations 'by which the average home-keeping Englishman justifies to himself the indulgence of sitting down and casting dust on his head whenever he looks back upon the exploits of his countrymen in India'.[15] The source of this misconception was Burke, who never 'wearied of denouncing the oppressors of Indian nationalities, the degraders of ancient nobility, and the dethroners of sovereign princes'. Macaulay, who knew better but did not care to spoil the rhetorical effects of his Indian essays by too minute accuracy, had simply repeated Burke's story of Warren Hastings' sale of the 'whole Rohilla nation'. Yet it could be easily proved that the one important reason why the English so rapidly conquered India was that in India there existed no nationalities, no long-seated dynasties or ancient aristocracies, in fact no solid or permanent organization. The other great misconception current about India was that the Hindu religion was an organized and definite religion such as Christianity or Islam and that the Hindu scriptures which the Sanskrit revival was making known to the West represented the actual moral teaching of popular religious practice. Lyall's method of refutation was to resort to actual observation of existing society by a study of the religious state of the

[15] Lyall, *Asiatic Studies* (first series, second edition, 1899), p. 203.

Central Provinces and of the political condition of the Rajput states. Not merely did he show that the religious practice of Berar so far from reproducing the lofty monotheistic tendencies of some of the Hindu scriptures ranged down to the crudest animism, but also that the Rajput states so far from being territorial sovereignties on the European model were only just beginning to emerge from the tribal to the feudal state. Like Maine, Lyall maintained that Indian society was 'not unlike ancient European society in an arrested state of development'. It was 'a mere loose conglomeration of tribes, races, and castes'. To explain this arrested state Lyall elaborated a subtle and profound historical theory. The primal state of all historical societies appeared to be a piecemeal and patchwork distribution of mankind into tribal units, each tribe being founded upon kinship groups and usually cemented together by religion. The natural historical tendency was for these separate and heterogeneous units gradually to amalgamate and become fused in larger masses and better-defined territories, the process often being violently accelerated by the conquering force of a great empire like that of Rome. The effect of such an empire was not simply to amalgamate but to crush and disperse the tribal groups, to weaken the notion of kinship as a political bond, and to reduce its influence to an even narrower circle. With a more settled life occupational groups appeared and became the basis of social organization. The process could be interrupted by the collapse of the empire, when tribal groups would tend to reappear. This was the situation of Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire. It had been the special achievement of Europe to form strong, stable national states out of this situation, and Lyall infers that this was accomplished by a counterbalance of centralizing monarchy, allodial aristocracy, and occupational groups. Kinship ties had so narrowed as to be restricted to the immediate family, and a sense of nationality had developed. This process had been stopped short in India, and instead of occupational groups being held together in a wider community by nationality, they had simply been strung together by the religious institution of caste. The main reason for this difference was political, the failure in Asia to develop any other principle of government than that of personal ascendancy. All states owed their origin to a military leader, 'who can raise and command an effective army, which he employs not only to beat rivals in the field but also to break down minor chiefships, to disarm every possible kind of opposition within his borders, and generally to level every barrier that might limit his personal authority. But he who thus sweeps away all means of resistance leaves himself no supports, for support implies the capacity to resist. . . . If the next ruler's heart or hand fail him, there is no longer any counterpoise to the overpowering weight of the sword in the political balance, and the State or dynasty is upset . . .'[16] It was thus the character of all monarchies and empires in Asia to be unwieldy, over-centralized and top-heavy, resting for their whole stability on the personal force of the ruler alone. When they fell the whole state collapsed into anarchy since there was no independent aristocracy or other institution as in Europe to break the fall. Asian history in consequence bore a cyclic character: 'in the incessant flux and change of Asiatic institutions the whole history of the ascent from the cave of Adullam to the chiefship of a clan, to the rulership over tribes, and sometimes to empire over a great territory, is constantly repeating itself'.

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[16] Lyall, *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (fifth edition, 1910), pp. 321–2.

These political circumstances also explained the lower mental and moral condition of India. It was not that advanced religious and moral conceptions were unknown, but that they had lacked the persistent backing of a stable political power to extirpate the lower polytheism and establish themselves with a formal ecclesiastical organization and a defined theology. The result was that in India primitive conceptions and practices continued to exist alongside the advanced beliefs of the educated few, unlike Europe where Rome and the later monarchies had crushed out the more primitive religions in the interests of Christianity and had thereby raised the whole mental and moral standard of the people. For the mass of Hindus religion still had almost no connection with morality, and Hinduism was simply a name for a perplexity of diverse practices and beliefs without any organized church to reduce them to order. Another result of India's political experience in the past eight centuries being limited to ephemeral tyrannies was that she had rarely known the continuous peace and prosperity in which the fearful superstitions of dark ages are put aside for more genial and loving creeds.

The social and political effects of Asian despotism were to be seen in their fullest extent in the Mughal Empire.[17] Lyall contributed a section on this subject to volume vi of the *Cambridge Modern History*. Mughal rule differed only in the fact that between Akbar's succession and Aurangzeb's death, a period of 151 years, there were only four rulers. This showed them to be men of exceptional ability and gave their empire an unprecedented longevity. Secondly the Mughals differed by being foreign conquerors constantly reinforced from outside. This latter fact was undoubtedly an element of weakness, because their power, resting on force like all Asian despotisms, had to depend largely on a mercenary army which was a double-edged weapon in a critical hour. The mainspring of this type of government was the conventional one of 'irresistible authority in capable hands at the centre'. The Mughals made 'a clean sweep of indigenous political institutions', and the aristocracy which they established was an artificial creation almost entirely official and dismissible at the sovereign's pleasure. No local autonomy was allowed to the large towns, and the great religious corporations, which in the Osmanli empire for instance controlled and fortified civil power, never exercised influence in the Mughal state. When the Mughals broke into India in the sixteenth century the Islamic faith had lost its early fervour; they were lukewarm adherents and were too few in numbers to effect the immediate establishment of Islam. Their Empire depended upon a toleration of religious belief, and the Emperors were so jealous of any rival authority that Akbar even destroyed the Ulema, or ecclesiastic hierarchy. The result was that the Mughals 'disorganised Hinduism without substituting a strong religious edifice of their own as they managed to do elsewhere'.

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[17] Cf. Lyall, 'The Moghul Empire'. *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. vi, chap. XV. *Asiatic Studies* (first series), chap. VII. *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 42–45.

> 'The combined result of all these facts and circumstances was an inordinate centralisation of authority at the capitals, whereby the whole fabric became unstable and top-heavy: so that when this supreme authority passed into feeble hands, the empire, loosened by internal revolt and battered by foreign enemies, toppled over into irremediable collapse.'[18]

This historical background explained the rapid rise and expansion of British dominion. Mill, the earlier philosophic historian, had been content to ascribe European arms and discipline as a sufficient cause, and no part of his *History* is less philosophic than his narrative of the establishment of British rule. Seeley in his *Expansion of England* (1883) was one of the first voices raised against the popular view that the Indian Empire was 'a standing miracle in English politics, only to be explained by the heroic qualities of the English race and their natural genius for government'. Seeley showed that there was nothing miraculous in itself in the British ascendancy given the political circumstances of the collapse of the Mughal empire and the complete absence of nationalities, but he denied that this was part of any far-sighted British intention or the consequence of any great historical movement. 'Nothing great', he declared, 'that has ever been done by Englishmen was done so unintentionally, so accidentally, as the conquest of India.' Lyall set out to refute Seeley in his *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (1894). Not merely could the British conquest be readily explained in terms of India's internal circumstances, but the original presence of British traders in India was not fortuitous as Seeley implied. In fact the British represented merely the latest and most powerful wave in the tide of European expansion which since the sixteenth century had been steadily overwhelming Asia, by sea-power in the South and by Russian land-power in the North. In its turn this tide of expansion was but part of the perennial struggle and interaction of East and West from the earliest times, and which under the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the

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[18] *Cambridge Modern History*, vi, 526.

Crusaders, and the Turks had taken the form of a struggle for the Middle East and the Mediterranean littoral.[19] Here was an historical vision of magnificent sweep, which not only contained a theory as to the natural historical development of society in both East and West, but also linked the two areas by this theme of their perennial contest. Unfortunately Lyall never elaborated his ideas at length. His *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion* is taken up principally with showing how the weakness of India had long been appreciated in the West nearly a century before Europeans began to participate in Indian politics, how conquest was made easy by the fact that European sea-power turned the flank of India's natural mountain defences, and how the prize of Indian empire was not really determined by the contests between English and French in India but by the world-wide contest between the two nations for command of the sea. Once established as a territorial power it was inevitable that the British should spread their dominion until they had attained a frontier resting on India's mountain barrier in order to defend themselves successfully against the other great European power in Asia, continental Russia.

Lyall did not rest content with the intellectual delights of his historical vision. For him, as for the other administrator-historians, history taught practical lessons. Firstly there was the lesson of political survival. With the example of the fate of over-centralized Asian despotisms before him he could not contemplate without anxiety the structure of British rule. Its tendency was to centralize and level in a far more rapid and efficient manner than its predecessors; by means of roads and railways, free trade, the operation of uniform law codes and centralized administration all local barriers were being dissolved. Furthermore, the intervention of the British Government to prevent famine and disease meant that it was taking upon itself responsibilities which had hitherto been considered the sphere of the gods, and failure in these matters would now be attributed to the Government instead of to the wrath of the deities. Hence Lyall had a much more flexible attitude than Stephen or Strachey. He believed that political decentralization in new forms was a political necessity. He accepted Ripon's local self-government measures and the establishment of provincial assemblies as steps in the right direction, though he never imagined for a moment that the British should impair their ultimate controlling power. Similarly he approved of the maintenance of the Indian States as a conservative bulwark. Although essentially artificial creations of the British, it was impolitic to disturb them. Dalhousie had leaned towards the blunder, 'extraordinary in so high-minded a politician', of believing that they should be absorbed into British territory. This was 'to miss the wise lesson of Akbar, who only annexed so much as was necessary to make his power paramount, and to fall into the error of Aurangzeb whose levelling and grasping policy ruined the Moghul empire'.[20] Likewise Lyall was apprehensive about the continual expansion of the British military frontier in the North West and in Burma, since over-extended Asian empires had fallen traditionally as much from a blow from without as a revolt from within. All these aspects of policy fitted into his view that now 'the English have accomplished the building-up, after the high Roman fashion, of an immense polyglot empire, the stability of the structure must depend upon a skilful distribution of weight, because excessive centralization is radically insecure, and supports are useless without some capacity to resist pressure'.[21]

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[19] *Cambridge Modern History*, vi, 506 et seq.

This was not a cynical *Realpolitik* concerned with power for its own sake. Possessing the conviction, like Stephen or Mill, that political power was the great shaping force of civilization, and the great lever by which the vast majority were raised to a higher mental and moral plane, he believed in the necessity and moral justification of the continuance of British rule. It had only to be maintained intact for a great transformation of Indian society to be effected. 'All that the English need do is to keep the peace and clear the way.' 'England's prime function is at present this, to superintend the tranquil elevation of the whole moral and intellectual standard'; and he appealed to the Western-educated classes to understand the position. The final gift of history was for Lyall clear-sightedness which could see through immediate difficulties and was not deflected by momentary storms. When Stephen trumpeted alarm at Ripon's policy in *The Times*, and the *Quarterly Review* published an article on 'The Crisis' in India, Lyall responded in the *Edinburgh* in tones of calm, philosophic wisdom and appealed to the lessons of history.[22] It was this lofty clear-sightedness which more than all things he admired in Warren Hastings, 'his faculty of looking through and beyond the passing clouds of adverse circumstances and accidental failure by which men are so easily blinded and dispirited, and of fixing his eyes on the main chances and essential conditions of success. He saw not only the sea of troubles which encompassed the English in India, but the calm and open waters that were to be reached by resolute and skilful navigation. So long as he could keep the vessel's head straight on the point to which he had set her, neither waves nor wind nor a mutiny on board, could wrench the helm from his straining hands.'[23]

Unfortunately Lyall never did justice to his powers. On the other hand Hunter had all the qualities of industry, application and ability to write, even though he did not possess quite the intellectual range of Lyall. But his *History of British India* never proceeded beyond the second volume, being cut short by his death. As *The Times*' leader-writer on India, Hunter's historical outlook was naturally saturated with contemporary political considerations. In essentials it did not differ from that of Lyall and it is difficult to assess how much he borrowed from him. In the *Annals of Rural Bengal* (1868) the young Hunter had envisaged the role of the British power as one of breaking down all physical, racial, and social barriers, in preparation for creating a united Indian nation. All previous efforts at uniting India as one state, from the time of the Mughals down to the Mutiny, had failed because the material means were inadequate to overcome the physical obstacles. Each stage in the process that led from trading company to the India of the Queen had been deliberately taken, and the history of British rule was one of constant readjustment to historical forces it had itself set in motion.[24] For this reason alone Hunter believed that some place had to be found for the Western-educated classes and that it was impossible to rule modern India safely or efficiently through a foreign bureaucracy alone. The *History of British India* was intended to depict the various historical phases of the British rise to power and to demonstrate how the English had constantly suited their position to historical circumstance. It also sought to show the importance of the Indian connection in British history, emphasizing that it was not a strange and fortuitous accident but 'flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone', the outcome of a long process of preparation intimately connected with Britain's rise to greatness from Elizabethan times. Hunter resorted to Lyall's theme:

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[20] [Lyall]: Article 'Government of the Indian Empire', *Edinburgh Review*, No. 325 (January 1884), p. 10. For authorship, cf. Sir H. M. Durand, *Sir Alfred Lyall* (1913), p. 477.

[21] *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India*, pp. 389–90.

[22] Sir J. F. Stephen, Letter to *The Times*, 1 March 1883. Lyall, 'Government of the Indian Empire', see note 1.

[23] Lyall, *Warren Hastings* (English Men of Action Series, 1902 edition), p. 183.

> 'In one sense, indeed, England is the residuary legatee of an inheritance painfully amassed by Europe in Asia during the past four centuries. In that long labour, now one Christian nation, then another, came to the front. But their progress as a whole was continuous. It formed the sequel to the immemorial conflict between the East and West, which dyed red the waves of Salamis and brought Zenobia a captive to Rome.'[25]

It was because of his conviction that the British position had been built up through a long period of unspectacular, patient labour that he was led to give special attention to the neglected period of the East India Company in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The British achievement 'was no sudden triumph but an indomitable endurance during a century and half of frustration and defeat'. His hero is Charnock who in face of persistent difficulties planted the humble beginnings of the capital of British India and went to his grave without honour or recognition. Constantly he emphasizes the importance of national character, for 'the national spirit has been the dominant factor in our fortunes and those of our rivals in the East'. Size had little to do with a European nation's success: 'The prize

[24] For Hunter's views cf. *India of the Queen* (1903).

[25] Hunter, *History of British India* (1899), i, 2.

fell successively to States, small in area, but of great heart.' No European nation had won the supremacy of the East which did not make it a national concern, and none had kept it without being ready to defend it with the utmost of its resources. So for Hunter the history of British rule in India 'stands out as the epic of the British nation—the fibre of its fibre, the express image of its inmost character, of its capacity for external growth and continuous self-rule . . . It will make the world understand the British race—adventurous, masterful, patient in defeat and persistent in executing its designs.'[26] Writing at the height of the Imperialist phase in England the patriot in Hunter had all but displaced the philosopher.

It will be seen in conclusion that the philosophic historians had set out with either or both of two aims: firstly, to discredit the Whig interpretation of Indian history which had taught that the founders of British rule were stained by greed, fraud, and innocent blood; secondly, to refute the traditional view that British dominion came as a result of a sudden, miraculous accident, and to demonstrate instead that it was the result of long-working forces and was an inseparable part of the history of Europe and of Britain. While their teaching was thus to reduce history to the interplay of impersonal forces and to discountenance the supreme role of the individual hero, their final lesson, even in Lyall's case, was a moral parable for the future handling of Indian affairs. Theirs was always history written by pre-eminently practical men with one eye constantly on Britain's contemporary position in India and her role in world affairs. This continued to be the mainspring of later administrator historians, of Vincent Smith and the archivists, Foster, Forrest, Hill, or of Lovett and his colleagues in the *Cambridge History of India.* When the whole case against their obvious bias and national prepossession has been made, it has yet to be shown that there is any adequate alternative to national pride and prejudice for keeping alive an active interest in Indian history in this country.

[26] Letter of Hunter, June 1897; F. S. Skrine, *Life of Hunter* (1901), pp. 468–9.

29. BRITISH HISTORICAL WRITING IN THE ERA OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

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The subject of this paper is British historical writing on South Asia in the era of the nationalist movement. I take the era designated to cover India, Burma, and Ceylon, with perhaps Nepal and Tibet thrown in, and the treatment to cover the modern periods of these countries' histories by writers working during their nationalist eras. One should perhaps first define what is meant by 'modern periods' and 'nationalist eras' in this context. For India the term modern period may be taken to date from the rise of the British power in the eighteenth century, the year 1740 being a convenient starting point; for Ceylon from the British ejection of the Dutch in 1796, and for Burma with the second Burmese war of 1852–3. The nationalist era may be said to have commenced in this region about the year 1880, though its roots stretched back much further and its first buds did not come within the views of most western observers before the Ilbert controversy and the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

Given these definitions we have to consider the nature of British historical writing on modern India during this period and to ask ourselves how far it was affected by and how far it affected the nationalist movements.

We may first notice what may be called the see-saw principle of western opinion about India. Men dealt with Indian affairs according to preconceived ideas; these in turn were modified by the views of those whose ideas had been developed by experience on the spot. These ideas in their turn were impressed on Indian affairs, to be modified again by fresh experience. The preconceived ideas themselves originally went back to reported experience. Thus the almost indestructible idea of India as a land of marvels and prodigies goes back to the Greek reporters, and the idea of India as a land of great wealth to a long line of travellers' reports. The decay of the belief in the Mughal empire as a powerful political machine is a good example of the correction of preconception by experience, as also the idea that India was a land to get rich in quickly in the late eighteenth century. But not only was there a see-saw between the ideas of those at home and those abroad, but also in the fundamental presuppositions of those at home. Thus in the seventeenth century India was seen as an alien and powerful civilization in its own right, with arts and sciences and a political structure of an order comparable with Europe, however much it might lack the light of the Christian West. It might be disliked or condemned, but it could not be despised. In the late eighteenth century the belief that the West had discovered the secret of progress through the use of reason put India in a new category of static cultures, doomed to fall further and further behind the ever-advancing West. In the nineteenth century the aggressive belief in progress put India, along with all non-European cultures, into a penumbra of semi-barbarism. And as there was a see-saw in the fundamental presuppositions of those in England, so there was a see-saw in the conclusions drawn from experience by those in India. The conclusion of the eighteenth-century conquistador was that Indian society was corrupt and rotten, a collection of fleshly nawabs and bucolic rajahs; the conclusion of many a few years later (such as Warren Hastings, Sir W. Jones, Abbé Raynal and James Forbes) was that the shoddy political façade concealed a culture of ripe wisdom and splendid art, and a way of life delightful in its simplicity and appealing in its romanticism. These people no longer described Hinduism as the abomination of Heathenism; they spoke rather of the 'gentle and polite Hindu'.

By this interaction of experience in India with presuppositions at home was born the various 'views' of India which have remained to perplex all students of her affairs since. Thus we have the 'hard-boiled' view of Clive and his school, that India exists mainly to produce pagoda trees for shaking; the 'sentimental view' of India as a seat of profound wisdom and idyllic life, 'the moral view' of India as a venue of deplorable customs to be reformed and of misguided persons to be improved; the 'romantic view' of India as the land of ivory palaces with bejewelled princes riding on cloth-of-gold clad elephants; the 'economic view' of a land of potential industrial wealth and actual poverty and misery.

It is only if we bear these cross-currents of opinion in mind that we can find a clue to the variations of approach to modern Indian history to be found in the period under review. As examples of the influence of these tendencies in historical treatment it may be permissible to quote some very clear examples before our actual period. A classic case of the application of rationalist utilitarian standards to Indian history is that of James Mill in his *History of India* (1817) which, with its continuation by H. H. Wilson, went through five editions up to 1858, and was perhaps the most important single influence moulding English opinion about India for the fifty years from its publication. The irony of the continuance of the work by Wilson lay in the fact that he objected to Mill's views on Indian society and sought to correct them. But as the means he adopted were long footnotes in very small type they were not read with the result that his revision in fact gave Mill's ideas about India a fresh lease of life. What Mill did for the rationalist school, Charles Grant did for the religious and specially Evangelical world, in his *Observations*,[1] etc., of 1794. Indian society was heathen and therefore bad. Leading examples of the influence of Indian experience on English opinion were the works of Sir John Malcolm and the *History* of Elphinstone,[2] which went through nine editions between 1841 and 1905. As Mill provided the case for radical innovation these two authors with their respect for Indian people and institutions reacting upon their conviction of the priority of western civilization, gave the case for cautious reform combined with respect for the past.

If we now pass to the era of nationalist movements we shall find that the considerations outlined above produced a great variety of historical treatment. Indeed there were also others, such as the professional backgrounds of the writers which also exercised an influence. Writers cannot be simply classified as for or against the national movement or for or against Indian culture. We have to take into account conceptions of history, conceptions of culture, considerations of current political and even corporate interests in interpreting the spirit of historical writing upon India.

Let us first consider changes in ideas about history. In 1880, in spite of the work of Buckle and Lecky, the dominant view of history was still the political. Indeed, the view was on the offensive, for Seeley was preaching that the political core should be taken from history to form political science, leaving to the realm of general history only picturesque detail or amusing anecdote. The rise of constitutional or institutional studies with the work of Stubbs and Maitland tended to strengthen this view; they represented the historical side of political science rather than an enrichment of history. While the full application of Seeley's views remained in abeyance, it was true that specialist historical studies tended to be regarded more as part of their related studies than of history proper. Thus literary history was part of literature and institutional history part of the science of institutions. Ideas, it is true, were admitted to history, but they were ideas as they related to or affected the state. Thus the *Cambridge Modern History* was overwhelmingly political, the chapters on literature and ideas being concerned with their function as influences upon politics. With economic history the case perhaps was different. While the original impulse to its study was its relationship to politics, its importance and influence came to be seen to be so profound that it never separated from the main stream of history. In this it exemplifies the trend of twentieth-century historical study. The tendency to drain off all kinds of historical study but the political from general history has ceased and instead the tendency has been for these streams to join together to provide a broader and deeper bid for general history. The conception of history has broadened, not only from the soldiers and statesmen to the people, but from the state to society. The extent of the change can be gauged by comparing Hume with Trevelyan on the English stage, or Gibbon with Toynbee on a world scale. This great change in outlook rather tardily affected writers on Indian history. To begin with the English achievement in India, and particularly the establishment of the British dominion, was mainly political, and then the Indian society which was its background was thought to be either static or doomed. Indian historical writing by Englishmen remained obstinately political until well into the inter-war period. The first awareness of other factors is perhaps to be found in Sir V. Chirol's *Indian Unrest* (1910) and *India*,[3] the latter published in 1926, and J. N. Farquhar's important work, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (1915). Both of them, from their differing standpoints, saw historical meaning in movements within an Indian society. Examples of this obsession were Sir A. Lyall's *British Dominion in India* (1896), Sir W. W. Hunter's two preliminary volumes on British India (1900), and P. E. Roberts' *History of British India* (1907). So politically minded were historians of the British period that Vincent Smith in the *Oxford History of India* could emphasize the cultural aspect of ancient India while neglecting it altogether in modern India. What was sauce for the ancient Indian goose was not sauce for the modern Indian gander. Nor did the economic origins of the British power in India shake the general conviction of the paramountcy of politics. As soon as possible attention was removed from the counting house to the council chamber and economic issues only treated in so far as they had political application. It is significant that the Bengal scandals of the late eighteenth century have received far more attention than the parallel Madras ones including the Nawab of Arcot's debts, because the former had important political implications. No comprehensive economic history of India has in fact yet been written by an Englishman. The first important and avowed economic history was, in fact, written by the Indian, R. C. Dutt.[4] But this work was, at least in part, political in outlook for one of Dutt's purposes was to criticize the government of India's land revenue policy. He succeeded to the extent of stirring Lord Curzon to a lengthy defence in a famous Minute. It was not until the twenties that one finds purely economic studies in such works as Lilian Knowles' *The Economic Development of the British Overseas Empire* and Dr. Vera Anstey's study *The Economic Development of India* (1929). And even these are not strictly economic histories.

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[1] Grant, C., *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the Means of Improving It. Written Chiefly in the Year 1792.*

[2] Elphinstone, M., *The History of India* (first edition, 1841; ninth edition, 1905).

R. C. Dutt was a retired official who went into state service and all-India politics. Drs. Knowles and Anstey respectively were and are independent scholars. These two facts may provide a clue to the cause of much of the one-sidedness of British Indian historical writing—one-sidedness in the sense that attention was mainly concentrated upon political issues. The political issues have received so much attention partly because of the dominant position held by the government in the life of the country and partly because those interested in Indian history were usually also connected with the government. For the most part they possessed some part or lot in the 'Commonwealth of magistrates' which administered India down to the First World War. Even if they were protesting members like William Beveridge, or disappointed ones like William Irvine, the ink of bureaucracy had entered into their pens and they wrote in political terms in spite of themselves. Those who wrote in England on Indian history were usually retired civil servants, with the same outlook. But even when they were not, like P. E. Roberts, H. H. Dodwell,[5] or Ramsay Muir, they continued to regard Indian history in political terms because of the prevailing *mystique* of the English historical outlook. The flood tide of liberal thought, still devoutly believing in the march of western progress, had little interest in anything oriental save the impress of the West upon it. It was the establishment of western power in the East that interested them and then what was done with that power. Their taste for moralizing found outlets in criticizing the methods by which that power was attained but it never occurred to them to question the desirability of the power being there at all. They were very ready to criticize the way in which that power was exercised and to sympathize with the small forward-looking westernized groups. But they considered that the significant things were the western things and so, apart from politics, they looked to the future when those western things might be dominant rather than to the past to study what they thought was an effete and dying civilization. In the minds of these people there was a discontinuity between the new and the old and so they concentrated on the new.

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[3] In *The Modern World* series, published by Benn.

[4] *Economic History of India*, 2 vols. (1901 and 1903).

I think that these considerations may partly account for the retarded date of the expansion of the British Indian historical outlook as compared with the development of the historical outlook in England itself. But expansion did come. The dominance of government in the public consciousness and of officials among historical writers meant that it could only come through the channel of official interests. Accordingly we find that the beginnings of a wider conception of British Indian histories came through administrative studies. The first administration discussions about India were political in tone, such as those surrounding the policies of Warren Hastings. There followed a factual period, when the desire to know eclipsed the desire to condemn or to justify, which produced the great line of parliamentary and revenue reports. There then grew up a historiography in administration which came to be all the more prized as it was seen that the period of British administration was ending. The culmination of this trend may be said to have been the administrative chapters in volumes v and vi of the *Cambridge History of India*. Indeed, a perusal of these works might suggest that the only significant aspects of recent Indian history were the political and the administrative. From interest in how the administration developed there arose interest in what was administered and from the study in methods of tax collecting the study of what there was to collect. So administrative studies passed into economic ones. Here we may note the influence of a man like Archdeacon Firminger, who introduced historical perspective into economic studies with his edition of the *Fifth Report on East India affairs.*[6] From his work it was but a step to the historical work of people like Dr. Anstey in the modern and the late W. F. Moreland in the medieval and Mughal periods.

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[5] H. H. Dodwell served for many years in India, but in the Educational Service, where he was one of the few who did not get swallowed up in administration.

Administrative interest and consciousness led not only to economic studies but also to constitutional ones. The rules governing the conduct of the state were an aspect of administration; legislative councils were instruments for making administrative regulations. Here the administrator met the lawyer, and practical experience jostled with legal maxims. As with administration, descriptions of what existed as in George Campbell's *Modern India* (1853) became records of development and discussions of principle. This process was exemplified in classic form in the successive editions of Sir Courtenay Ilbert's *Government of India*, first published in 1898. From this we proceed to the full-scale constitutional studies like those of Sir Berriedale Keith or W. A. J. Archbold.

But even when the concept of British Indian history had extended from politics to administration, economics, and the constitution, there still remained a discontinuity between the history of the British in India and the history of the Indian society as such. British historians in general were concerned with British activities and regarded the vicissitudes of Indian society as being outside their ken. Indian society being unprogressive and perhaps decadent the important thing was what the British did and how what they did affected the Indians. There was not a little of the outlook of the Panjab school, the best publicized group in British Indian history, in this attitude. 'What's for their good, not what pleases them,' was the attitude to Indian tradition, and 'to labour, but not to hope for any reward' (except salaries and pensions of course) was the measure of expectation of Indian response. Thus we find that the works of the period up to 1914 commonly opened with a description of Indian manners and customs, an emphasis of their diversity and an assumption of their decadence. The story of the British epic and British benevolence then follows. This was not, it is true, the invariable attitude in the nineteenth century, for there was a time in the thirties when the more optimistic rationalists and Evangelicals really believed that reason and scriptural light, once applied to Indian darkness through such media as English education and preaching, would produce an immediate response and cause India to transform herself within a generation. The fading of this roseate dawn of uplift produced the reaction expressed in the outlook of the Panjab school—a determination to do Indians good in spite of themselves. Thus, on the see-saw principle, western progressive opinion's conviction in the effeteness of eastern civilization was reinforced by the British administrators' conviction of Indian unteachability.

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[6] Calcutta, 1917.

This discontinuity showed itself in the separation of works on sociology and works on history. Rather, perhaps, we should say the historians failed to take into account the sociologists. Such works as Risley's *The People of India* and Crooke's *The Natives of Northern India* described things as they once were without looking to the future while the historians were too busy looking to the future to take social tradition into account. It may be replied that some conservative service-historians did in fact give weight to the past. This may be true but then they did not look to the future. The more impressed people were with the importance of Indian tradition the more certain they were that a western transformation with its corollary of a political handover, would be a very lengthy process and a very distant goal.

The bridging of this gulf of discontinuity is the crux or turning point of British Indian historical writing. How it came about is by no means clear, and perhaps the best that can be done at this stage is to offer a few suggestions. On the side of the British in India there were a few who from the eighties detected in the new middle class the germs of new India—men like Hume, Cotton, Wedderburn, Beveridge, and Yule. But they saw people like Surendranath Bannerjee, Justice Ranade, Firozshah Mehta, and G. K. Gokhale as standard-bearers of the new westernism rather than as welders of the new and old elements. They were right in that they looked for the harbingers of the new age in the right place, the middle class, rather than, as had been done from the time of Elphinstone to Lytton, to the aristocracy. But they were wrong in supposing that the Indian part of their heritage was not material. In any case they were a small and not much regarded minority of Anglo-Indian opinion (in the old sense). It was rather, I think, a change in the climate of opinion in England which led to a vital change in the outlook of the British Indian historian. As English historical views ranged from politics to institutions economics, social patterns and ideas, so India began to be regarded with different eyes. New looks revealed new significances and people came to realize that the Indian half of an Indian's life was not necessarily without significance for the future. Another factor in producing this change of view was the progress of Oriental studies. The civilization and philosophy exposed by Sir W. Jones' revelation of Sanskrit to Europe profoundly affected the intellectual world but for a time its practical effect upon the estimate of current Indian institutions was offset by the influence of the dominant doctrine of progress. Even mid-Victorian self-confidence could not altogether quench the query, if Indians could do this once, why not again? The science of comparative religion, which sprang from this discovery, provided fresh girders for the growing bridge, because it raised Hinduism and Buddhism, for purposes of comparison, on to a level with Christianity. Anthropology, on the other hand, tended to pull down western civilization from its pillar of separateness from barbarism by showing the common primitive origins of all civilization and blurring the old sharp distinction between barbarism and civilization. All these sciences tended to produce a new attitude of respect towards other cultures. As signs of this new attitude may be cited the foundation of the Theosophical Society in India in the eighties, the impression created by Swami Vivekananda at the Chicago conference of World Faiths in 1898. The more open-minded missionaries felt the influence of these ideas: the writings of men like C. F. Andrews[7] and J. N. Farquhar in his *Crown of Hinduism* and *Modern Religious Movements in India* treated Christianity as the culmination of Indian religions rather than as their supplanting. All these influences were having their effect before 1914, but above all, I think we must regard the First World War of 1914–18 as perhaps a decisive factor. With it went, as an article of general credence, the belief in a law of progress whose operation was a western secret. In perspective we can see that Dean Inge's Romanes lecture of 1919 was rather a victory dance over a fresh-dug grave rather than a mortal intellectual blow. To liberals like H. A. L. Fisher the world thereafter seemed to be slipping backwards; to others to have resumed its customary mode of oscillation. With the idea of progress went the old confidence in European superiority and with it the complementary disbelief in the significance of Indian culture. So the secular historian found his thought running on parallel lines to that of the missionary, seeing the western transformation as the crown of an Indian cultural awakening, rather than as the result of an Indian total rejection of the past.

It is these factors, it is suggested, that eventually bridged the gulf of discontinuity and started British historians on a broader line of studying the impact of western influences upon India rather than the mere rise of British political power in India. The tone of the new history was cultural rather than political and indigenous rather than foreign. We may call it the shifting of the point of observation from Calcutta to Delhi.

The symptoms of this change of mental outlook are to be found in the attitude displayed towards old standard histories, to new ones produced in the old spirit, and in the tone of other new works. Thus we find that while a work like the *Oxford History of India* continued to be read, its British portion was felt to be more and more unsatisfactory because it seemed to tell less and less of the story as others saw it. The last two volumes of the *Cambridge History of India*, in spite of its distinguished editorship and many valuable contributions, aroused much criticism because they were felt to be collections of studies on politics and administration rather than a history of India. A political study like Al Carthill's *Lost Dominion* (1922) appealed powerfully to the older generation because it was conceived in terms of discontinuity and assumed that the Indian was incorrigible from the western point of view. For the same reason today the book appears archaic in outlook as well as quaint in expression. Sir M. O'Dwyer's memoirs have dated in something of the same way. An expression of the new approach was Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt's *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, for all its breathlessness and over-quotation, as was also Garratt's *Legacy of India*. These works and others like Cumming's *India Today* led on to O'Malley's Chatham House study *Modern India and the West*, a frank treatment of the whole theme of the British in India in terms of cultural contact.

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[7] e.g. *The Indian Renaissance* (1908).

If we turn now to the British treatment of the national movement we shall see that it was conditioned by the tendencies of thought outlined above. There was the concentration on the political and there was the acceptance of the discontinuity of British India with traditional India. The former prepossession made it difficult for historians to believe that an Indian political movement could be interpreted in any other terms than those of power. Indian political history was seen as the rise and fall of a series of power complexes without visible connecting links or threads of development. The deeper rhythms of social and cultural development in Indian history were unperceived by men whose own national development had found congenial expression in political institutions. As they had looked for Indian leaders in the wrong sort of class, so they looked for the principle of development in the wrong sort of history. Professions of belief in democracy were therefore regarded with scepticism. The principle of discontinuity formed another barrier to the acceptance of the claims of Indian nationalism at its face value. If Indian culture was at a dead end, western culture had as yet few followers. The various classes of cultural hybrids were viewed with suspicion as hares running with the hounds who might at any moment dive into a traditional thicket. Hence self-government, like Delhi, was far off, because it depended upon the conversion to western values of the great majority of the people, a process which still seemed, at the end of the nineteenth century, to be painfully slow.

In the last twenty years of the nineteenth century the leading British Indian historian was perhaps Sir W. W. Hunter, who died in 1900 on the eve of completing the second volume of his work on British India, which dealt with the Company's history down to 1708. Hunter was enlightened and perceptive as well as able, but though he was a pioneer of economic studies with his *Annals of Rural Bengal* and showed unusual insight into the mind of the Muslim community with his *Indian Mussulmans* (1876) his outlook was dominantly western and political. His *History* prefixed to the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, his *India under the Crown*, the 'Rulers of India' series which he edited, are filled with the consciousness of British achievement while frankly admitting shortcomings. He saw the British story as one of the building up and organization of dominion until 1857, and then administrative consolidation on the one hand and the planned introduction of modern life on the other. Britain was to lead India into the modern world with a paternal authoritarian hand. Confidence in British leadership and western supremacy is expressed in the last pages of Sir A. Lyall's *British Dominion.*[8] Against such weighty opinions works like Sir H. Cotton's *New India* (1885) or W. S. Blunt's *Ideas about India* (1885) could make little headway.

When a nationalist movement appeared in the guise of the Indian National Congress, professing democratic principles and asking for the introduction of self-governing institutions on that account, its sponsors were regarded as amiable visionaries and their Gladstonian sympathizers in England as unrealistic sentimentalists. The nationalists were a 'microscopic minority', thought to be cut off from the body of the people by their western affiliations and the principle of discontinuity. Local officials characteristically tended to treat the national movement in administrative terms as a problem of local self-government. The early tendency was, therefore, to regard the national movement as an irrelevance or to overlook its existence. Lord Curzon, most historically minded of Viceroys, hoped in 1901 'to assist Congress to a peaceful demise'. This attitude was maintained by Vincent Smith in his *Oxford History* of 1911. Indian nationalism was overlooked rather than denied or condemned.

The first shock to this attitude which suggested that the movement might possess some popular substance, was the agitation against the Partition of Bengal. But since the 'bhadralok' were held to have no influence with the people or the people to understand the 'bhadralok', this had to be accounted to 'unscrupulous agitation'. When feeling went underground and turned to terrorism, this became 'anarchism' and 'murderous conspiracy' since it could not, by definition, be genuine nationalism. Sir Verney Lovett, in his *History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*,[9] first written as a secret government report, had got a little further than this by 1918, but he still held that nationalism was a western thing which was foreign to the masses.

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[8] Sir A. Lyall, *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (1894).

[9] Published 1919.

But this theory of 'agitation' and 'anarchism' did not satisfy more detached and inquiring minds. Sir V. Chirol in his *Indian Unrest* of 1910[10] showed the first sign of understanding that the national movement had struck roots in the country. His description of the growth of the movement in his *India* (1926) remains one of the best short accounts yet written. On the Indian side important influences were the speeches of G. K. Gokhale and the writings and poems of Rabindranath Tagore. The one suggested to the practical that Indians could be completely at home in the modern world, while the other convinced the intellectuals that eastern and western ideas could be harmoniously fused.

As has been mentioned, the shock of the First World War, with its stimulation of national feelings, the surprise of the Russian revolution and the later flooding in of American democratic ideas, did much to produce a new attitude of mind towards India in England. But more than this was required to convert the historian. The conversion proceeded in two stages. The first was the conviction that the National movement was politically important. This was achieved by the non-co-operation movement of 1920–2; those who were still inclined to regard this movement as a post-war expression of wartime discontents were finally convinced by the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930–1. It was then generally agreed that Gandhi had achieved the miracle of extending the movement to the masses. This was the stage reached by the late Professor Dodwell and expressed in his *India 1858–1918* and his contribution to the *Cambridge Shorter History of India*. It was also the position, more liberally expressed, of the late P. E. Roberts in the second edition of his *History of British India*. It was also the general tone of new works published in the twenties except for archaic polemics like the books of Al Carthill and Ellam. The final stage came in the thirties as it was realized that the national movement had spread its roots into Indian society while retaining its western *mystique*. Nevertheless, the works of that time had still a slightly embarrassed or defiant air, like that of Thompson and Garratt, as though the authors were not quite sure of their new views. It remained for O'Malley and Professor Coupland to accept the new outlook as an intellectual atmosphere in which to breathe and work. Since the war this attitude, the comprehensive or cultural interpretation of Indian nationalism, has been generally accepted. But it has by no means been fully worked out. The view of the Indian nationalist movement as the product of transforming influences set in motion by the impact of western ideas and forces upon Indian society has yet to find its Trevelyan or its Halévy. For this to be done successfully there must be substructure of detailed studies, not only political, administrative, and statistically economic, but also social, cultural, and intellectual. There are some, but not as yet very obvious signs of this, for Indian scholars have

[10] Also *India Old and New* (1921).

tended to follow the lines laid down by a previous generation of English ones; therefore their work has so far been largely political and administrative. The stimulation and direction of this work is a fitting and honourable one for an Oriental School like that of London which has already done so much to promote a rational approach to British Indian history.

30. NATIONALIST HISTORIANS

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Historiography was practically unknown to the Hindus at the beginning of the nineteenth century. With the spread of English education in the second quarter of that century, the Indians began to learn, along with many other modern ideas, the value of historical knowledge, and also gained a great deal of information about the history not only of India but also of the whole world. A deep interest in the study of history and cultivation of the art of writing history may thus be said to have grown in India about the middle of the last century. Historiography in modern India, at least among the Hindus, is thus barely a century old.

Unfortunately the Hindus gained their first knowledge of the history of their own country from treatises which gave unmistakable evidence of deep-seated prejudices against the Hindu culture and civilization, both of the past and of the present times. The natural resentment against this had a twofold effect. It whetted their appetite to learn more of the historical facts which would enable them to refute the charges or calumnies in books written by the foreigners. At the same time it laid an undue emphasis on the duty of Indian students to study history with a view to vindicating their past culture against unfounded charges of the European writers. This considerably narrowed down the scope of history, and added an element of acerbity in historical judgement. It was partially responsible for occasional lapses of that detached attitude, balanced judgement, and proper perspective which form the basis of true history. It is only against this background that we can understand the real significance of the phrase 'nationalist historians', when applied to India. It is a comparative term to be used by way of contrast with the foreign historians, mainly British. It does not necessarily connote a body of men whose sole object was to glorify their country's past at any cost, though, as will be shown later, such a feeling was not always or altogether absent. Nor need the term be confined to Indians, for even Europeans, including Englishmen, indulged in theories and criticisms which distinguish the so-called nationalist historians of India. As a matter of fact, not unoften we find that even the most extreme views of nationalist historians of India were based on, or derived from, those propounded by European scholars.

For the purpose of present discussion, the designation 'nationalist historians' is confined to Indians. It is, however, difficult to draw a line between nationalist and other Indian historians. In a sense, it may be argued that some sort of nationalist bias may be traced among all Indian historians. But the same thing may be said, more or less, of historians of all nationalities, when writing the history of their own country. We therefore restrict the use of the term to those Indians who are not purely or merely actuated by a scientific spirit to make a critical study of an historical problem concerning India, like any other country, but whose primary or even secondary objects include an examination or re-examination of some points of national interest or importance, particularly those on which full or accurate information is not available or which have been misunderstood, misconceived or wrongly represented. Such an object is not necessarily in conflict with a scientific and critical study, and a nationalist historian is not, therefore, necessarily a propagandist or a charlatan.

Subject to these preliminary remarks, we may proceed to analyse the various forces that were at work in creating nationalist histories in India and giving them the shape, form or direction in which they have developed.

Broadly speaking, nationalist history of India was originally a reaction against the British histories of India, and later gathered its strength and inspiration from the awakening of national consciousness among the Indians. Still later, it received further impetus from the countrywide agitation for securing political rights which slowly merged itself into the movement to free India from the yoke of the British. In order to understand its origin and nature we must begin with an account of some typical text-books on Indian history, written by British authors, *which had a wide currency in India.*

The first in point of time was the *History of British India* by James Mill, published in 1818. He begins with an elaborate account of the Hindus and seeks to prove that the abject condition in which the English found them in the eighteenth century represents their normal condition throughout their history. He ridicules the 'hypothesis of a high state of civilisation' propounded by Sir William Jones in regard to the ancient Hindus and observes:[1]

> 'Their laws and institutions are adapted to the very state of society which those who visit them now behold, such as could neither begin, nor exist, under any other than one of the rudest and weakest states of the human mind. As the manners, the arts and sciences of the ancient Hindus are entirely correspondent with the state of their laws and institutions, everything we *know* of the ancient state of Hindustan conspires to prove that it was rude.'[2]

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[1] James Mill, *The History of British India*, fifth edition (London, 1858), ii, 109.

[2] Ibid., p. 115.

In forming a comparative estimate, Mill declares that the people of Europe, even during the feudal ages, were greatly superior to the Hindus.[3] Proceeding further he observes: 'In truth, the Hindu like the Eunuch, excels in the qualities of a slave.'[4] A few lines further on he remarks: 'In the still more important qualities, which constitute what we call the moral character, the Hindu ranks very low.'[5] After all this, it scarcely surprises us to be told that 'it will not admit of any long dispute, that human nature in India gained, and gained very considerably, by passing from a Hindu to a Mohammadan government'.[6]

There is no doubt that Mill's view was primarily due to ignorance. But it is impossible to absolve him altogether of a deep-rooted prejudice against the Hindus. Speaking from the historical point of view, he committed the great blunder of reading the present into the past. Unfortunately, this sort of prejudice or blunder marked the average Englishman in India and, more or less, clouded the visions of subsequent English historians of India also, the difference being one of degree, not of kind. Elphinstone, for example, whose *History of India* was published in 1841, was very sympathetic to the Hindus. Yet it seemed to him extraordinary that the Arabs 'should not have overrun India as easily as they did Persia'.[7] He suggested all possible and impossible reasons for this, but never even hinted at the only rational explanation that would have occurred to any unprejudiced mind, viz. that the Hindu rulers had strength enough to resist the Arabs. Again, in the face of the clear testimony of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, regarding the maritime activities of the Indians, Elphinstone tacitly assumed that the trade was 'conducted by Greeks and Arabs'.[8] Though he admits the trade intercourse between India and western countries by land or sea at an even earlier date, he regarded it as 'uncertain whether the natives of India took a share in it beyond their own limits'.[9] Elphinstone's *History of India* was a standard text-book in the examinations of the Indian Civil Service in England and the Universities in India as far back as 1866, or perhaps even earlier. The young Englishmen formed their notion of the Hindus, over whom they ruled with iron hand, from a book which contains such passages as: 'The most prominent vice of the Hindus is want of veracity, in which they outdo most nations even of the East.'[10]

The third great English historian of India, V. A. Smith, writing at the beginning of this century, emphasized, in his account of ancient India, 'the inherent weakness of the greatest Asiatic armies when confronted with European skill and discipline',[11] and prophesied the inevitable relapse of

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[3] Ibid., p. 148. [4] Ibid., p. 365. [5] Ibid., p. 366. [6] Ibid., p. 342.

[7] Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India*, ninth edition (London, 1916), p. 305.

[8] Ibid., p. 183. [9] Ibid., p. 182. [10] Ibid., p. 213.

[11] V. A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, second edition (Oxford, 1908), p. 109. For comments on this, cf. R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India* (Banaras, 1952), p. 109.

India into political chaos, which has been her normal condition, except for rare intervals, 'if the hands of the benevolent despotism which now holds her in its iron grasp should be withdrawn'.[12]

I have mentioned these three historians because they were the leading authorities on the subject so far as an average Indian was concerned; for even in the first decade of this century, when I was a college student, all the three books were prescribed as text-books for Indian history. To an Indian mind, therefore, these three books, to which others may be easily added, represent the general trend of Englishmen's views from the beginning to the end of British rule.

Several other tendencies among European writers may be clearly noted throughout the nineteenth century. Even when positive evidence was being brought to light about the past greatness of the Hindus, there was a conscious and deliberate effort to minimize its importance. This was sought to be done by various ways. One was to deny the antiquity of Indian culture by suggesting the lowest possible (or even impossible) date for her literary works like the Vedas and Epics. Another method was to belittle this culture by suggesting that Indians borrowed most, if not the whole, of their culture from the Greeks[13] and where that appeared to have no basis, from the Assyrians, Persians, Babylonians, etc. Wherever there was the least similarity between Indian and foreign ideas, Indians were taken to be the borrowers. The Epics were supposed to be indebted to Homer's works, Indian drama, mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy were derived from the Greeks, and even Krishnacult was derived from Christ. The very poor evidence on which such theses were boldly enunciated, even by learned scholars, demonstrated a prejudiced mind rather than bad logical deduction or inference.

The third method was to belittle the value of Indian culture by selecting or stressing only its weak points and ignoring its better aspects.

A class of writers, more particularly the Christian missionaries, took special care to bring into prominent relief the social abuses, religious superstitions, and those actions of the Hindu gods and goddesses, and corrupt practices sanctioned by Hinduism which were grossly immoral or highly obnoxious to modern minds. But their righteous indignation was not provoked by similar abuses in their own society and religion.

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[12] Ibid., p. 331.

[13] The following passage may be read with interest in this connection: 'We know that the trigonometric sine is not mentioned by Greek mathematicians and astronomers, that it was used in India from the Gupta period onwards (third century) . . . The only conclusion possible is that the use of sines was an Indian development and not a Greek one. But Tannery, persuaded that the Indians could not have made any mathematical inventions, preferred to assume that the sine was a Greek idea not adopted by Hipparchus, who gave only a table of chords. For Tannery, the fact that the Indians knew of sines was sufficient proof that they must have heard about them from the Greeks.' J. Needham, 'History of Science and Technology in India and South-east Asia', *Proceedings of the National Institute of Sciences of India*, xviii, No. 4 (1952), p. 360 (reprinted from *Nature*, vol. 168, 14 July 1951, pp. 64 ff.). 'Paul Tannery, so famous for his studies on ancient mathematics' (ibid.), represents a type, not an individual.

Thus while the burning of widows was regarded as a barbarous trait in Hindu culture, no thought was given to the burning of heretics in Europe. While caste system was condemned, no reference was made, even for the sake of comparison, to the slavery and serfdom in ancient and medieval Europe, and the treatment of the 'blacks' by the 'whites' in modern times.

Generally speaking, the European writers, with a few honourable exceptions, were guilty of this kind of partisan national spirit, and often indulged in the habit of comparing the Hindu with the European culture by contrasting the worst features of the former with the best aspects of the latter.

The inevitable reaction was not long in coming. The Hindus, particularly the English-educated class, were provoked beyond measure by the general tone of English writers and were eager to accept the challenge. The response to the arrogant claims of superiority by the British writers and their belittling of the Hindu culture took various forms and covered a wide range. It would be a laborious task to trace in detail the growth of Indian reaction to various points at issue in chronological stages of development, and it must suffice to take a broad view and analyse the main trends of thought.

As could be easily anticipated, the cause of Hindu religion and its sacred literature was taken up first. The attitude was both defensive and aggressive. Minds influenced by the rationalist spirit made an attempt to prove that Hindu religion and society mean only the purer forms as enunciated in the Vedas, and that the later growths do not deserve that appellation. Thus the worship of images, degraded forms of caste-system, and many abuses that crept into Hindu religion and society in later times —things which formed the targets of European criticism—were all sought to be swept away as so many accretions of degenerate times. The extreme form of this view is represented by Dayananda Saraswati, who put a new interpretation upon the Vedas, differing radically both from the traditional as well as western, in order to prove that they contain the most rational ideas on every subject and even anticipated the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century.

Another school sought to prove that Hinduism, taken in all its aspects of development, formed a highly spiritual force, and justified the social evils and religious superstitions by giving them a new interpretation and a spiritual significance. This school is represented at its best by Rajnarain Bhose, Bhudev Mukherji, Chandra Nath Basu, Bankim Chandra Chatterji and others, while one of its extreme and extravagant exponents was Sasadhar Tarkachudamani. This school not only defended Hinduism against all criticism by foreigners, but asserted the superiority of Hinduism to all other religions, particularly Christianity.

The material side of Hindu culture was also defended with equal zeal against European criticism, and this task was facilitated by the Europeans themselves. The archaeological discoveries and researches in ancient Indian history, carried on mostly by them, revealed a number of valuable and interesting data which were utilized by Indians to disprove the inferiority of Hindu culture, *vis-à-vis* the western, so long asserted by the Europeans. The writings of Rajendralal Mitra and Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar and a few others show Indian scholarship at its best. The results of the researches of these Indian scholars and a galaxy of distinguished oriental scholars of Europe were brought together in three compendious volumes entitled *Civilization in Ancient India* by R. C. Dutt, in the closing years of the eighties of the last century. This may be regarded as the first nationalist history in the best sense of the term. It is 'nationalist' more in a negative than in a positive sense. In other words, it is free from the prejudiced outlook of European writers which had hitherto dominated the works of Indian history. But it is equally free from the extravagant nationalist sentiments of the Indians which were provoked by it. This does not mean that Mr. Dutt's book is free from errors. But the errors are mostly those of judgement and ignorance of facts, and very rarely, if at all, the outcome of a preconceived national bias. This is best evidenced by the fact that the book did not fully satisfy either the Hindus or the Europeans. The orthodox Hindus held that life in the Vedic age was more spiritual, more pious, and contemplative in its tone and character, than that depicted in the book, and they refused to accept its account of the rude self-assertion and boisterous greed for conquests of the Vedic warriors. On the other hand, the Europeans took the opposite view. Dr. Kern observed, while reviewing the book, that 'some scholars delight in describing all that was robust and manly and straightforward in the character of the Vedic Hindus, while others portray their coarseness and imperfections'. He was of opinion that Dutt adhered to the first school, but that the truth lies midway.

Whatever we may think of Kern's criticism, it has to be admitted that the rationalist outlook of Mr. Dutt is sadly lacking in much that was written by Indians in later times. This will be best understood from a reference to extreme views on certain points.

As regards the antiquity of Hindu civilization Dutt followed more or less the views of Max Müller, but later Indian writers have carried it much further back. B. G. Tilak referred the Vedas to third millennium B.C. while A. C. Das placed the composition of at least some hymns of the Rigveda to ancient geological epochs, probably before the end of the Tertiary epoch.

While stressing the infinite superiority of Hinduism in the spiritual field, attempt was made to show that ancient India was not much behind modern Europe even in scientific achievements. It was claimed that not only firearms of bigger size, but even aeroplanes were known in the age represented by the Epics. Dr. R. K. Mookerji's book, *A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity* was a rejoinder to Elphinstone's assumption mentioned above.

While a class of Europeans was anxious to prove that Indian culture was mostly derived from foreign sources, some Indian scholars declared with equal vehemence that India was almost immune from any outside influence. Actuated by the same spirit, it has been strongly held by a section of Indian scholars that India was the original home of the Aryans and they spread from this country to Europe.

The criticism of social abuses was met in two different ways. Some denied, for example, that the caste system was an ancient system, while others justified it by specious arguments about division of labour, and the analogy of similar institutions in European countries.

The same procedure was followed in regard to the position of women. It was pointed out by some that the status of women in the Vedic period was very high and that they also occupied an honourable position in later times. On the other hand, their secluded life and position of inferiority were justified by others on social, economic, religious, and spiritual grounds, and the low or degraded position of women in many respects, even in Europe, was sought to be proved as an indirect justification.

So far, we have dealt with the effect of reaction provoked by European writers on Indian history. A further impetus to the nationalist historians was given by the growth of national consciousness among the Indians, mainly caused by the spread of English education, and through it, of western ideas. Its first effect was a demand for higher political status mainly by the institution of popular Government on the western model. All the objections which the British Government advanced against such concessions were sought to be met by arguments based on Indian history.

The British were never tired of repeating that India was not a country but a congeries of smaller States, and the Indians were not a nation but a conglomeration of peoples of diverse creeds and sects. The nationalist arguments against this view were summed up in a scholarly treatise entitled *The Fundamental Unity of India*, by Dr. R. K. Mookerji. The religious unity and spiritual fellowship among the Hindus all over India was held to be the basis of nationalism which overrode barriers of language and distance; the ideals of an all-India Empire and full or partial realization of it in the past, were stressed in justification of its demands for the present.

In order to prove the fitness of the Indians for democratic type of Government prevailing in the West, the history of the republican tribes in

India, to which attention was drawn by Rhys Davids, formed the subject of a good deal of study and research. But sober attempts in this direction were marred by extravagant claims made by writers of the type of K. P. Jayaswal. He sought to prove that not only a constitutional form of Government, but the entire parliamentary system, including Address to the Throne and Voting of Grants, was prevalent in ancient India. He also gave a new interpretation to many words and passages in inscriptions and literary texts in order to prove that responsible Government, with all that it implies in the West, existed in ancient India with its full paraphernalia.

With the growth of nationalist sentiment, the Hindus began to lay great stress on their heroic fights against Muslims. Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* served as a model and a store-house of materials. Inspiring historical accounts were written of the long-drawn-out struggles between the Rājputs and the Muslims, in which the Rājputs almost always came out with flying colours. Similarly in delineating the history of the Marāthās, great stress was laid on their successful campaigns against the Muslims, inspired by the ideal of founding a Hindu Empire (*Hindu Pad Padshahi*). Their treatment of the Rājputs and plundering raids against the Hindus were either forgotten or ignored. Similarly the alleged faults of Shivaji were either exonerated or minimized, and sometimes even explained away. The Sikhs also appeared as fighters for freedom against both the British and the Muslims. Ranjit Singh became the ideal statesman and the battle of Chilianwala counted as a victory of the Sikhs. The heroic activities of the Rājputs, Marāthās, and Sikhs were cast into a new mould to suit the spirit of the time. So modified, they became popular themes and formed the subject-matter of novels, stories and poems written by such eminent men as Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath and R. C. Dutt.

There was also a psychology behind all this. Hindus wanted to remove the stigma of their easy defeat at the hands of the British, and refute the view of the British Government that they were unable to protect India without their help. As all this implied deficiency in military skill and lack of bravery and heroism, the historic examples of the Rājputs, Marāthās, and Sikhs were enlisted in support of their claim for military greatness.

Urged by the same motive, the Hindu historians sought to belittle the military achievements of the British. The Battle of Plassey, which laid the foundation of the British rule, was held to be the result of treachery, but no great importance was attached to the successive British victories against Mir Kasim and Shah Alam. English victories in the Sikh wars were set down to bribery of the Sikh leaders, but Chilianwala was quoted as an evidence of the superiority of Sikh military skill. Above all, they were never tired of pointing out that it was mainly with the help of Indian soldiers that the British had won India. Not much notice was taken of the numerous battles, like those at Kirkee or Sitabaldi, in which a handful of troops commanded by the British defeated Indian soldiers more than ten times their number.

With the development of nationalism and political consciousness, the nationalist history was also marked by an intense hatred against the British. The activities of the British Government, as well as of individual Britishers, were painted in the blackest colours. The economic exploitation of India, involving ruin of trade and industry, and impoverishment of India almost to the level of starvation, formed the theme of laborious works of men like Dadābhai Naoroji and R. C. Dutt, who followed in the footsteps of Digby. Their moderate tone offers a striking contrast to the writings of Major B. D. Basu who made a long catalogue of the evil deeds, errors of omission and commission, of the British in both economic and political spheres. His books are profusely documented, and his charges, supported by facts and figures, are not easy to refute. But his scathing comments leave no doubt that his main object was to draw a lurid picture of the British in India and to arraign them before the bar of public opinion of the world. Historical criticism of various measures of the Indian Government, both in regard to internal administration and in respect of Native States, was definitely marred by a nationalist bias. The most glaring example of the former is furnished by the almost unanimous condemnation of the policy of promoting English education which was represented as a deliberate move only to prepare a set of clerks. As to the latter, Dalhousie's policy of annexing Native States was strongly condemned, though a hundred years later highest praises were reserved for the man who followed it in a more thoroughgoing way and by far more dictatorial methods.

Individuals, especially those who distinguished themselves in founding the British Empire, like Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley, came in for a good deal of criticism. It comprised both well-deserved condemnation and unmerited censure, but there was an unmistakable animus in these writings inspired by nationalist feelings. As an instance, a reference may be made to a book entitled *Clive, the Forger*. A lack of balanced judgement, accompanied by a truculent mood, was also in evidence in criticisms of frankly reactionary Viceroys like Lytton and Curzon. Correspondingly, those who opposed the British were regarded with sympathy, sometimes much more than they deserved. Siraj-ud-Daula and Mir Kasim were represented as great heroes and patriots, fighting to the last for the sake of their country. The Black-hole tragedy was repudiated as a myth, and the massacres of Monghyr were lightly passed over. Even Nandakumar was hailed as a great martyr.

The aversion towards the English also found good scope in severe denunciation of the colonial imperialism of the British, and, in particular, their attitude towards the Boers and the Irish. The hypocrisy of the British and their unlimited greed for power and pelf were taken for granted.

Napoleon's description of the British as a nation of shopkeepers struck the right chord in the heart of the Indians, and formed the basis of their judgement of English character.

The struggle for freedom against the British, which took a definite shape early in this century, intensified some of these anti-British feelings, and introduced new ones. Besides, it ushered in a new type of nationalist movement in Indian historiography. This may be generalized as a deliberate re-interpretation of Indian history in order to infuse enthusiasm in the fight for freedom and sustain or strengthen the cherished creeds and slogans of the Indian political leaders. An instance of the former is afforded by the re-naming of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 as the Indian War of Independence. V. D. Savarkar's book with this title is a typical specimen of the representation of history from an extremely nationalist point of view.

Hindu-Muslim unity was believed by the political leaders to be a *sine qua non* for ultimate success in the fight for freedom, particularly as the British Government held out the differences between the two communities as the chief obstacle to the grant of Dominion Status to India. The entire history of India during the Muslim period was accordingly re-interpreted in order to prove that the Hindus and Muslims always behaved towards each other like good brothers and formed one nation; that the Hindus were not a subject people during the so-called Muslim period, and that it is the British who for the first time imposed foreign rule upon India. Even a man like Lala Lajpat Rai supported all this with elaborate arguments in his *Young India*, and a committee set up by the Congress published a voluminous treatise in support of this thesis. Dr. Tarachand's book, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, is another attempt in the same direction, though more divorced from historical facts, and less justified on grounds of national exigency.

The growth of party politics had full repercussion on history. The history of the political struggle during the first half of this century has been deeply coloured by the political views of the party to which the author belonged. The two books, *Indian National Evolution* and *Indian Politics since the Mutiny*, written respectively by A. C. Majumdar and C. Y. Chintamani, two veteran members of the Moderate party, and *A Nation in the Making*, an autobiographical memoir of Surendranath Banerji, one of the great leaders of the party, are more or less party pamphlets rather than sober history. The two books written by Hiren Mukherji[14] and R. Palme Dutt[15] plainly betray the influence of communist ideals. It is hardly necessary to refer to numerous other historical writings of the period which are frankly propagandist and are deeply coloured by the ideologies of the Revolutionary, Socialist, Communist, and other parties.

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that the nationalist school of history has not vanished from India with the achievement of independence. Ideas and notions, once acquired, die hard, and many historical conceptions or slogans which were clearly the outcome of political exigencies during the period of struggle for freedom, have come to stay, even though the necessity of the same has disappeared. In addition, fresh tendencies are gathering force, which, if unchecked, would again pervert the history of India. The non-violent method of struggle against the British, initiated by Mahatma Gandhi, has now become a regular creed with an influential section of people, and they are re-interpreting Indian history in order to prove that 'non-violence' has been the eternal creed in Indian politics. Whether such a view, opposed to all known facts of Indian history, except the isolated case of Asoka, would ultimately succeed in re-shaping or modifying the history of India, it is difficult to say. But the signs are not very propitious.

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[14] *India struggles for Freedom* (Bombay, 1946).

[15] *India Today* (Bombay, 1947).

Another ominous tendency is a sharp turn towards orthodoxy in interpreting the religious institutions and social ideas of the past. It seems to be due to the psychological tendency to connect the political bondage to the West with the ideological changes brought about by western influence. So the freedom from one naturally cries for freedom from the other. The desire to remodel India according to the genius of Indian culture is natural enough, and welcome within certain limits. But it involves a clear conception of what Indian culture is, and this gives a tempting opportunity to re-shape Indian history. In a democratic age, everyone seems to assume that a knowledge of Indian history is a birthright of every Indian, and requires no patient study or research. So different images of Indian culture are being formed by different interpretations of Indian history according to individual idea, taste, or fancy.

Orthodoxy being a more potent force in Indian society, there lies the danger of nationalist Indian history taking a sharp turn towards the right. But the opposite tendency of a sharp turn towards the left is also not altogether lacking. The newly acquired ideal of a 'secular State' is opposed to all known facts of Indian history. But it is sought to be buttressed by a new conception of Indian history and culture, which recognizes no distinct Hindu or Muslim culture in modern India, and looks upon these, along with European or western culture, as so many streams meeting together only to mingle and lose their separate entities in the sea of Indian culture. The Muslims, however, repudiate any such idea, and Islamic culture is not only recognized as a distinct entity, but has been formally adopted as the basis of the new State of Pakistan. In India, however, a small but gradually increasing class of influential persons now fight shy of the term 'Hindu' as a designation of a cultural unit, and only think in terms of an Indian culture. Whatever may be the value of such an idea in shaping India's culture, it becomes positively dangerous when it encroaches upon the domain of Indian history and seeks to ignore the existence of Hindu culture as one of the most potent and patent facts of Indian history even today.

Having thus discussed some of the main trends of the nationalist history in India, it is necessary to say a few words about its merits and defects. As regards the latter, broad hints have been given above how nationalist historians not unoften deviated from the true principles of historical study in order to support a particular point of view. In extreme cases and due to political exigencies, they ignored patent facts of history or deliberately misrepresented them, or drew important conclusions from extremely insufficient data. In many cases, the judgement was warped by strong political or party feelings, and history was made a handmaid of current political agitation, or party propaganda. In short, the nationalist history of India exhibits more or less the same defects as are inherent in national histories of any other country.

On the credit side, it must be remembered that the study of history in India received its first impetus from nationalist sentiment and was largely sustained by it throughout the British period. A good many historical works, belonging to the 'nationalist' class, in spite of their professed or implied nationalist tendency, deservedly occupy a very high place. A great deal of patient and industrious study has been devoted by Indian scholars in various branches of history, particularly the economic condition of India during the British period, and the progress of the ancient Hindus in such fields as political thought, administrative organization, trade, and maritime activity, fine arts, and positive sciences, where they were least expected to achieve any distinction at all. The share of the Indians in the reconstruction of their political and social history is also not negligible. Above all, they have made a new approach to the study of Indian history. They have stressed the point that the political or dynastic history, the materials for which India lacks, is not necessarily the only or even the main aspect of 'history', but have rightly drawn our attention to the cultural history for which India has abundant materials. Therein also lies, according to them, the true history of India. This idea was adumbrated by Rabindranath in his inimitable language, and has now caught the imagination of India. The importance of the part of India lying to the south of the Vindhyas has been fully realized from this point of view, and due importance had been attached to the synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian culture. A great change has come in their outlook of modern times. 'The true history of India during the British period does not consist of the activities of the East India Company or of its successor, the British Crown, but of the upheaval which led to the transformation of Indian society, through the activities of India's own sons.' K. M. Panikkar's book, *A Survey of Indian History*, published in 1947, from which the above sentence is quoted, may be looked upon as one of the most recent nationalist histories, and the following passage from it throws an interesting light on the nationalist historians of today:

> 'Ever since India became conscious of her nationhood . . . there was a growing demand for a history of India which would try and reconstruct the past in a way that would give us an idea of our heritage. Brought up on text books written by foreigners whose one object would seem to have been to prove that there was no such thing as "India", we had each to "discover India for ourselves". I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that it was a spiritual adventure for most of us to gain in some measure an understanding of the historical processes which have made us what we are and to evaluate the heritage that has come down to us through five thousand years of development.'

Much of their efforts in all the various directions noted above may be traced to nationalist sentiment, but the result shows that such sentiments are not incompatible with a high standard of achievement.

Time is perhaps not yet ripe for a proper valuation of the nationalist history of India. It would be an interesting study to institute a comparison between the deviation from the correct historical standard to which Indian history has been subjected by the nationalist sentiments of Indians on the one hand and the nationalist-cum-imperialistic ideas of Englishmen on the other. The consequences of the withdrawal of British power from India and the benefits of British rule formed the subjects of keen and acrimonious dispute between Indian and English nationalist schools. The truth of the assertions and assumptions, so confidently made on both sides in this connection on the basis of historical study, may now be partially tested in the light of actual events in India, since she attained her independence. Nine years' time is no doubt a very short period in the history of a nation, and no final judgement is possible on the results of such a short experiment. Still many predictions on both sides have proved to be false, and many defects in both the points of view already strike a discerning eye. It is difficult for an Indian or an Englishman of the present generation to pass a correct judgement on the relative merits or demerits of the history of India which was influenced by the nationalist sentiment either of Indians or of Englishmen. But there is no doubt that there were nationalist histories of India of both these types, and both seriously erred, though in opposite directions. The extent of their errors must be left to the verdict of history.

31. THE ROLE OF BANKIMCANDRA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISM

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Introductory Note—Early Developments

Of the aspects of growth in Bengal during the nineteenth century, which formed the major part of Bankimcandra's cultural and literary inheritance, the following appear relevant to a study of the origins of nationalistic sentiment and of Bankim's role in its development.

1. Bengali prose, which was born at the beginning of the century, mainly as a result of the work of William Carey. It was taken up by Rām Mohan Rāy, Iśvarcandra Gupta, and others, and by the seventh decade was partly accepted as a vehicle of expression for general subjects.

2. The Newspaper. The *Samācār Darpan*, published in 1818 from the new press at Serampore, was the first important Bengali newspaper. It was followed by many other papers, including notably the *Sambād Kaumudī* of Rām Mohan Rāy in 1821, and the *Sambād Prabhākar* of Iśvarcandra Gupta in 1831. The newspaper provided a channel for the publication of prose writing, thereby ensuring its ultimate status; and it trained writers to seek their reputation at the hands of the reading public, instead of as previously from those of wealthy patrons.

3. The New Hinduism. The revival began with Rām Mohan Rāy's essays on the Vedānta. The *Sambād Kaumudī* was used as a public platform for discussing and criticizing the trinitarian teaching of the Christian missionaries.

4. The emergence of an intellectual and well-to-do middle-class in Calcutta, which spoke English in preference to Bengali, and found its cultural standards and modes of behaviour in the literature and manners of the West.

By 1860, a few years before Bankim began to be known as a great author, these four trends in the social, religious, and literary life of the province were well advanced. He inherited them; he did not create them.

Newspapers and Bengali Prose

In 1872, Bankimcandra published the first issue of the newspaper *Banga Darśan*. The introductory article contains a statement of his intentions:

to supply Bengali prose compositions which he hoped would be of interest to the reading public. Though a fairly considerable amount of prose had been published during the first six decades of the century, there was little of it that was worth reading. Bankim described the situation as a vicious circle. 'There is one outstanding barrier to the writing of Bengali by educated Bengalis. Educated people do not read Bengali; and what educated people will not read educated people do not wish to write. If I say to one of them, "Why have you who are a Bengali such a distaste for Bengali books and papers?", he will say, "What Bengali books and papers are there for me to like? If I could get anything worth reading, I should certainly read it." I must admit openly that there is no answer. The few Bengali compositions we have can be finished in two or three days, and then we have to wait two or three years before anything else comes out. Thus the distaste of Bengalis for Bengali increases.'[1] (*R.*II, p. 283.) There were other contributing factors. The pandits regarded Bengali as a barbaric language, and an unsuitable vehicle for any but the coarsest subjects. If they did condescend to write in Bengali, they used a heavily Sanskritized vocabulary which no one but a Sanskrit scholar could understand. Furthermore, the new middle-class in Calcutta wrote, read, and spoke English, though, as Bankim caustically remarks, it was 'sometimes sixteen annas and sometimes twelve'. Even Bankim's first novel for publication was in English; and R. C. Dutt, who later wrote much in Bengali, said, when Bankim first asked him to write in Bengali, that he did not know how to write Bengali. This was the period to which Rabīndranāth referred in a Convocation Address to Calcutta University: 'There was a time when the pupils in the first standard of a Normal School thought it no shame to say that they did not know Bengali; and the people of this country rewarded them with promotion.' Macaulay's Minute recommending the adoption of English as the official medium of instruction in schools had the approval of a large section of the educated public. They would have opposed any other decision.

Bankim had nothing but admiration for English, which he publicly stated to be necessary for the progress of the people of Bengal, and for the growth of a common understanding between the different peoples of India. What he deplored was that the attitude of the middle-classes to the language problem had made Bengalis as a nation not bi-lingual but parti-lingual: the educated spoke English and affected ignorance of Bengali, while the common people knew only their mother tongue. The country was split in two by a linguistic barrier. Tagore called it 'untouchability between classes'. *Banga Darśan* was Bankim's attempt to resolve the dilemma. He contributed to it prolifically himself, and at the same time collected a team of promising writers to assist him. His personal share consisted of essays covering a wide range of subjects, literary, historical, religious, and social; and perhaps most valuable at the time, serial episodes of several of his novels. The success of the paper was immediate. Tagore bears testimony to the eagerness with which the reading public waited for the next issue.

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[1] Reference abbreviations: 1. *R*: *Bankim Racanābali*, published Sahitya Parisad (Calcutta, 1954), 2 vols. An omnibus collection of Bankim's works. 2. *NCC*: *An Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, by Nirad C. Chaudhuri, published Macmillan (London, 1951).

It ran for only four years, but in the last issue, Bankim was able to say with a pride comparable with Landor's in its superb self-satisfaction, '*Banga Darśan* appeared four years ago. The greater part of what I intended has been accomplished. There is no longer need to continue it.' (*R.*II, p. 909.) He had proved by demonstration that Bengali prose was adequate for the exposition of a wide range of subjects, learned or popular; but, much more important in its subsequent effects, he had generated among the Bengali people a pride in their own language. He became 'the undisputed monarch of the literary world. His popularity and influence spread over the whole of India.' In his lifetime Bengalis had begun to compare him with the great writers of the world. It is true that an objective valuation of his literary talents might not lead to so laudatory a judgement; but objective considerations here are irrelevant. What mattered in the history of Bengal was the opinion of his work held by his own people. He had provided nationalism in Bengal with its own native idiom.

A New Theology

The Christian missionaries, who were at work in Bengal in the first two decades of the century, could not have anticipated that one of the results of their teaching would be a revival of Hinduism, involving a reappraisal by Hindu scholars of their own theology and a critical review of religious and social practices. Rām Mohan Rāy produced an exposition of the Vedānta teachings, the theology and ethics of the early Hindus, and defended them against Christian critics; but at the same time he deplored and condemned certain practices which had crept in: idol worship, animal sacrifices, *satī*, and the ban on widow-marriage. Debendranāth Tagore, the poet's father, continued the campaign. 'As soon as I came to understand that God was without form or image, a strong antipathy to idolatry arose in my mind. I remembered Rām Mohan Rāy, and pledged myself to follow in his footsteps.' (*Autobiography*, p. 54.) He went beyond his teacher in ignoring caste distinctions and dissociating himself from the accepted *pūjā* ceremonies of his family. He was followed by the more revolutionary Keśabcandra Sen. It is doubtful, however, if their teachings had a very wide currency beyond a small intellectual circle in Calcutta. But the movement is important, intrinsically and historically, in that it revived a knowledge of the Vedānta and represented a positive opposition to Christianity and its propagation in India.

It was not until Bankimcandra began to write his religious articles in the *Banga Darśan* that the case for popular and deistic, as opposed to learned and monistic, Hinduism was presented with any authority. In a series of monographs, *Kṛṣṇacaritra*, *Dharmatattva*, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* (*R*.II, pp. 407–583, 584–679, 680–775 respectively) he proclaimed Kṛṣṇa as the supreme deity. Vedāntaism he rejected as unreal and irrelevant to modern conditions of life and the needs of man. 'I cannot understand what a quality-less (nirguṇ) god is.' (*R*.II, p. 432.) 'Religion in its fullness cannot be found in the quality-less god of the Vedānta, because he who is without qualities cannot be an example to us. What the monists call *ekamevādvitīyam*, and Herbert Spencer the "inscrutable power in Nature" have been set up in the place of God. There can be no complete religion in the worship of a philosophical or scientific deity. The basis of religion is a God with qualities, such as is mentioned in our Purāṇas and in the Christian Bible, because He and He only can be our model. The worship of an impersonal god is sterile; only the worship of a personal God has meaning to man.' (*R*.II, p. 593.)

Kṛṣṇa is presented in Sanskrit and Bengali in many guises. Bankim made an arbitrary selection of such characteristics as he found acceptable to his theology, though he claimed that his selection was determined by criteria which were based on historical principles. His Kṛṣṇa is primarily the deity of the Bhagavadgītā. The traits and actions described in the *Viṣṇupurān*, *Harivaṃsa* and the *Bhāgavatpurāṇ* were frequently admitted by him as allegories, but he allowed himself freedom to reject whatever in these works was not confirmed in the Gītā. The deity of the *Gītagovinda* and 'yātrā' plays he dismissed summarily. (The *Srīkṛṣṇakīrtan* and *Vaiṣṇavapadāvalī* were not published until after his death; and I can find no evidence that he had studied the biographies of Caitanya.) He contended that the theory of the ten *avatārs* of Viṣṇu was comparatively modern and fictitious (*R*.II, p. 405). Kṛṣṇa was the only authentic *avatār*. Rādhā, who figured so prominently in Vaiṣṇava teaching and in Hindu festivals, was to him Kṛṣṇa's wife. Here he followed the *Brahmavaivarttapurāṇa*, and rejected the versions of her story which depict her as the wife of Āyan Ghoṣ, and Kṛṣṇa's mistress. He would have nothing to do with the tantric doctrine of 'paradār', which figured so prominently in the Padāvalī. This interpretation of Rādhā's relationship with Kṛṣṇa, though he devoted little space to it, permitted him to incorporate in his doctrine the theology of puruṣ-śakti, thereby extending its appeal to Vaiṣṇavas and Śāktas alike.

It is Bankim's allusions to Christianity that constitute what is perhaps the most important part of his theology, when it is viewed as conducing to the growth of nationalist sentiment in Bengal. Though few direct references are made to Christ, the characteristics of Kṛṣṇa which Bankim chose for special emphasis leave no doubt that he was making a continuous comparison between the two, in which the advantage was with Kṛṣṇa. The corollary that Hinduism was therefore a religion of a higher order than Christianity has obvious political implications. Kṛṣṇa was God and man. As divine he was to be approached with *bhakti*. His divine qualities could not be comprehended, and therefore could not be described. Christians might attempt, if they wished, to describe the divine nature of Christ. As man incarnate, Kṛṣṇa embodied in ideal form all the qualities that man needs in his search for perfection. He was a hero, a general, a protector, and, in every sense of the word, magnanimous. Christ by contrast was 'udāsīn', a word of vague but derogatory connotation, which in its contexts I would translate as 'meek, gentle and lowly'; though it is not clear how far Bankim would have gone with Auguste Comte, whose works he was familiar with, in regarding meekness as the negation of greatness. The human virtues claimed for the incarnate Christ are but part of those which are present in Kṛṣṇa.

> 'He who by the strength of His arm subdued the wicked, by the power of His wisdom united India, by the power of His knowledge proclaimed a unique self-less religion, Him I salute. He, who being full of love and self-less, performed all those acts which mankind finds difficult; who, though by the strength of His arm he won an empire for another, refused to mount the throne Himself . . . who in the land whose strength was the Vedas, at a time when the Vedas were strong, said, "Dharma is not in the Vedas—Dharma is what conduces to the well-being of man", whether He be God or man, I salute Him. He, who contains within Himself alone Buddha, Christ, Mahommed and Rāmcandra; who is the source of all strength, of all virtue, of all religious truth, of all love, whether He be God or not, I salute Him.' (*R*.II, p. 594.)

Bankim's theological justification of Kṛṣṇa, God and Man, does not, however, include a statement of other aspects of Hinduism. It does not account for Śāktaism, for example. Vedāntaism, it is true, had been rejected, and the basis of a Hindu creed, which scholars could invoke in their debates with Christian missionaries, had been formulated; but the intellectual propositions which he had supported with so many citations from scripture, were not of the type to make a wide appeal to the majority of his countrymen, who were far more likely to be stirred by the Śākta hymns of Rām Prasād Sen and the stories of Caṇḍi and Manasā, than by a learned apology for a deity, whose god-hood and incarnation could be proved only by long and involved theological arguments. It is clear that Bankim was aware of the difficulty, and uneasy about it; but he made no attempt to solve it on the theological level. Whether he felt that it was not possible for him to argue the case for Śaktaism as coherently and convincingly as for Kṛṣṇaism cannot, in the absence of an explanation from him, be known; but it is a noteworthy fact that in his theological essays there is scarcely any reference to devī-worship. Durgā, Kālī, or whatever name the goddess bears, must be sought in his novels, where there is no explanation of her relationship to Kṛṣṇa.

The revolting sannyāsīs in *Ānandamaṭh* worship Kṛṣṇa, who authorizes their actions; but they appear to derive their inspiration from Kālī. They call themselves 'santān', children, the children of the Mother. Durgā the Mother is 'bangabhūmī', 'janmabhūmī'. All Bengalis are her children; and it is in her name that they fight. It is to her that they turn for protection and all good gifts. They believe that as she triumphed over the buffalo and trampled it under her feet, so they, with her help, will overcome their foes. In certain passages in *Ānandamaṭh*, *Śitārām* and the famous *Durgotsab* from *Kamalakānter Daptar*, Bankim spoke with different accents from those used in his essays. He addressed himself as a Bengali to the feelings of the Bengalis. Though the *Durgotsab* is technically written in prose, it throbs with poetic fervour. It is at times almost inarticulate with emotion; and translation for that reason is impossible. The leading away of Satyānanda, the leader of the sannyāsīs, from the field of battle, to seek philosophic calm in the temple of Visṇu, in the final chapter of *Ānandmaṭh*, reads like an anticlimax after his passionate plea to be allowed to sacrifice his life before the image of the Mother, in whose service he had fought. In like manner, the words of Bankimcandra, the learned theologian, make heavy reading compared with the fervid utterances that Bankimcandra, the religious prophet, puts into the mouth of Kamalakānta. There were two Bankims, speaking with different voices; and it was the voice of Bankim the prophet that rang most loudly in the ears of his own and subsequent generations.

Finally, Bankim incorporated in his religious teaching, lessons learned from Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Speaking of the theory of evolution he set out the following as the four stages of life on earth: jaṛjagat (world of matter), jībjagat (animal world), mānasjagat (world of intelligent beings, i.e. man), samājjagat (world of society). (*R*.II, p. 443.) Of these four, the last is the highest in the evolutionary scale. Parallel with them he aligned four stages in human affection: ātmāprītī (love of self), svajanprītī (love of family), svadeśprītī (love of country), jāgatikprītī (love of the world). These four, he argued, are not in opposition to one another; they are in an ascending scale of importance within the evolution of human society. Accepting Herbert Spencer's dictum, that 'the life of the social organism must, as an end, rank above the lives of its units', Bankim explained as follows:

> 'Saving one's country is a higher duty than saving oneself; that is why thousands strive to save their country even at the cost of their lives. In the same way as saving one's country is a higher duty than saving oneself, so it is a higher duty than saving one's family. Your family is only an insignificant part of society, and it is right to surrender what is only a part for the sake of the whole.' (*R*.II, p. 660.)

But Bankim was not an atheist. Man's highest duty is devotion to God.

> 'Saving one's family is a higher duty than saving oneself; saving one's country is a higher duty than saving one's family. Since devotion to God and love for the whole world are one and the same, it may be said that apart from devotion to God, love for one's country is the highest of all duties.' (*R*.II, p. 661.)

Later, lest the doctrine of patriotism should appear weakened by any philosophical qualification, he stated categorically, 'sakal dharmer upare svadeśprītī ihā bismṛta haio nā' (Patriotism is the highest of all duties; do not forget this).

Thus Bankim the teacher and prophet presented his countrymen with the following synthesis: philosophy and science teach that the 'world of society' is the highest form of organized life, and that 'love of country' is the emotion which will lead man to it; Kṛṣṇa, the God of the Hindus, having provided Indians with the noblest of all religions, confirms with His divine sanction the right of Hindus to fight for a world in which their *dharma* can find full expression; and Kāli, the Mother of the Bengalis, is present to inspire them with her example and march before them into battle. Nationalism was right therefore because it lay at the highest known point of human evolution, and because for the Hindu it had divine approval.

History and Hero-worship

Bankim never claimed to be a historian. Later in his career he went out of his way to disclaim any such classification. In the introduction to *Durgeśnandini*, he described the novel as *itibṛttamūlak*, i.e. based on history; but within a few years, being alarmed possibly by what seemed to him the ascription of an unjustified importance to the historicity of his romances, he asked, in the introduction, that *Debīcaudhurānī* should not be regarded as an historical novel, and stated that, in writing *Ānandamaṭh*, 'it was not his intention to write an historical novel'. Nevertheless, he did attach great importance to the study and writing of history.

The subject is dealt with at length in one of his *Bibidha Prabandha*, in which he posed and attempted to answer the question, 'Why is India a subject country?' The answer is startlingly frank: 'Because Indians are weak (balhīn) and effeminate (strīsvabhāb).' (*R*.II, p. 234.) His long, laboured dissertation may be thus briefly summarized: Indians are weak not because of any inherent frailty but because they have no sense of unity or national pride; and there can be no sense of unity and national pride until Indian history is described and interpreted by Indian historians.

> 'There is no Hindu history. Who will praise our noble qualities if we do not praise them ourselves? It is a rule of life that a man who does not let it be known that he is great is considered of no account by his fellows. When has the glory of any nation ever been proclaimed by another nation? The proof of the warlike prowess of the Romans is to be found in Roman histories. The story of the heroism of the Greeks is contained in Greek writings. The case for Mussulman valour in battle rests only on their own records. The Hindus have no such glorious qualities simply because there is no written evidence.' (*R*.II, p. 236.)

In another place he wrote that among Hindus, Bengalis were the worst off in respect of written history. 'Even the Oriyas have a history.' (R.II, p. 330.)

Other arguments advanced in his essays run roughly along the following lines. In the past there were many kings and heroes, who fought with valour and distinction against foreign invaders; but their deeds are either not known or have been distorted because there were no Indian historians to record them. (He attached no importance to the stories of the *kāvyas* and *purāṇas*.) Furthermore, their wars, whether fought against a foreign invader or another Indian prince, as so many of them were, were not national wars, but limited and personal, of concern only to the king and his soldiers. The common people—this phrase is used frequently—suffered as a result of their campaigns, but they took no part in them. The masses of the Hindus were never conquered because they took no part in the struggles for sovereignty. Having no consciousness of being members of a national community, they were indifferent to the nationality of their ruler. A good alien monarch was preferred to a less good native one; though they were never moved to go to his defence if he was attacked, whether he was good or bad, alien or native. The idea of liberty was unknown to any of the Indian people, except the Rajputs. There is no mention of *svādhīnatā* in ancient or medieval literature. The words for freedom and independence come to Bengal as neologisms, for the concepts to which they refer were previously unknown, having just been imported from Europe, where national greatness varies in direct proportion to a sense of unity and national pride.

> 'Whether pride in one's own nation is a good thing or a bad thing, the nation in which it is strong becomes more powerful than other nations. Nowadays the sense of it is paramount in Europe, where by reason of it

> there have been many national uprisings. By reason of it, Italy has become a unified nation. By reason of it, a new and powerful German empire has been established. And the process still goes on. . . . The ancient Aryan invaders of India were conscious of their nationhood, but in the course of time they became divided into small and separate units, and lost it.'

These passages and others of a similar content make clear Bankim's attitude to history and historical studies: they are a means to an end, rather than a discipline of value in themselves. The end is the creation of a sense of unity and national pride; the means, the selection of historical material and the presentation of it in such a way as to achieve that end.

> 'Bengali kings on many occasions ruled large empires in northern India. Debpāl of the Pāl dynasty was famous as the Emperor of India. The banner of Lakṣmanṣen was set up in Benares, Prayāg and Śrikṣetra. Moreover he was ruler of at least a third of India. Bengalis were for many years overlords of Orissa. The race which conquered Mithila, Magadha, Prayāg, Utkal, etc., whose flag flew over the Himalayas, the Jumna, the Sea of Utkal, Siṃhal, etc., *was no mean race.*' (*R.*II, p. 331.)

The words italicized leave no doubt that in Bankim's view the purpose of historical writing was to arouse and promote patriotic, that is to say nationalistic, sentiment.

It is doubtful, however, if the logic of the arguments in Bankim's essays would so have stirred the minds of the Bengali public, had not his novels, whose popularity was already established, made so lively an appeal to their emotions. The stories of Hindu heroes and heroines in his novels served as examples to illumine and enliven the closely-knit and often laborious reasoning of his essays, and justified what might have been interpreted as unfriendly judgements by converting them into a cult of self-examination and open confession. He thus proved his right to condemn everything that fell short of the highest standards of patriotism. Tagore was aware of both aspects of his teaching:

> 'It is not merely that he made us free from fear, consoled us, and made good our failings; he also crushed our vanities. There are some who strive to prove the pre-eminence of Bengali literature, and try to delight their country by pouring forth without intermission a stream of extravagant panegyrics. Bankim's discourse, however, though it can utter praise, is also armed with a sword.' (Bankimcandra, p. 10.)

The valour and patriotism of his heroes, Jagat Siṃha, Pratāp Rāy, Mahārāna Rājsiṃha, Satyānanda, and the beauty, faithfulness, and fortitude of his heroines, together with the scenes of their triumphs or sacrifices, made a great and lasting impression on his readers. Their noble and dedicated lives inspired the Bengali mind, and made it for the first time feel proud of its nation. They were exemplars pointing the way to the future, for it was foremost in Bankim's intention to teach that what Hindus had done in the past they could do again in the future. Men who for years had felt that their only hope for the future lay in imitating the West and forgetting that they were Indian now turned back, as Michael Madhusudan Datta had done, to their motherland and mother-tongue. The standards of nobility quoted from the history of foreigners no longer shamed them. The worship of heroes of their own race begot pride, from which, because the experience was shared by so many of them, sprang hopes of unity. Time proved the wisdom of Bankim in choosing the historical novel as a vehicle for his teaching; for whatever reservations he himself put on the historicity of his romances, to his readers they were historical, and the characters in them real, not fictitious.

His later novel, *Ānandamath*, deserves to be treated separately and at some length. It is Bankim's greatest contribution to the early growth of nationalism. A band of sannyāsīs, united by a common vow of chastity and obedience, taken before the image of Kṛṣṇa, were pledged to rescue the country from its Muslim rulers and their British allies, and to set up a Hindu state and bring back prosperity to the land. Associated with Kṛṣṇa as the object of their *bhakti* was the goddess Kālī, who, by a transmutation of genius, became the Mother of all Hindus, the Mother of their country. And it is relevant to notice that in making her so Bankim was able in effect to identify with his own teaching that of Rām Prasād Sen, the Sākta poet of the eighteenth century, who was in his day, and still is, the most popular poet of Bengal. The Mother, who in Rām Prasād's poems destroyed demons and protected her worshippers, now led patriots on the road to freedom. Held together and inspired by their certainty of her assistance, and that of Kṛṣṇa too, the sannyāsīs won a great victory over the combined forces of their enemies; and as they marched through the country they had 'liberated', they chanted the famous hymn, *Bande Mātaram*, a poem which Bankim had written some years before and had kept until he could create a suitable context for it. This hymn, throbbing with the enthusiasm of a successful campaign for national freedom, became the anthem of the *svadeśī* movement. The two words, *Bande Mātaram*, soon became one of the most emotion-charged slogans of modern times. Writing in 1909, Śrī Arabinda had this to say of it:

> 'The new intellectual idea of the motherland is not in itself a great driving force; the mere recognition of the desirability of freedom is not an inspiring force. . . . It is not until the motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass

> of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for the mother and her service, and patriotism that works miracles and saves doomed nations is born. To some men it is given to have that vision and reveal it to others. It was thirty two years ago that Bankim wrote his great song. . . . The Mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of Patriotism. The Mother had revealed herself. . . . A great nation which has had that vision can never again be placed under the feet of the conqueror.' (*R.*I, intro. p. 25.)

Racial and Communal Attitudes

(*a*) *Muslim.* Bankim's references to Muslims are generally unfriendly, and in many places unmistakably hostile. So far as I have been able to check, in his essays and novels, he consistently treats the terms 'Hindu' and 'Indian' as synonyms, and uses either in any context without discrimination. I have found no context in which 'Indian' can be interpreted to include 'Muslim'. Though he never explicitly said so, the implication of this terminological usage is clear: Muslims are not Indians, they are aliens. Whenever Bankim described warfare, the contestants were Hindu Indians and alien Muslims. There are no grounds for supposing this attitude to be other than the result of a deliberate choice.

In certain isolated cases, such as that of Osmān in *Durgeśnandini*, Muslim characters are sympathetically handled; but usually they are cast in the roles of tyrant and oppressor. They are the abductors of women, and the rapacious collectors of taxes. Their cruelty is often for cruelty's sake.

> 'Hearing the cry to dash his brains out with his handcuffs, the Phakir Mahāśay felt some apprehension, lest he should be deprived of the pleasure of seeing a living man buried alive.' (*Sītārām*, pt. I, ch. 4.)

In the earlier novels, Muslims are, in spite of their cruelty, presented as fierce fighting men; but in the later, they are regularly depicted as poltroons, and the references made to them are frequently sneers of contempt.

> 'A cannon ball can fall in only one place; so if one ball is fired there is no need for 200 men to flee. But if the Muslims see a single ball coming, the whole lot of them run away.' (*Ānandamaṭh*, pt. I, ch. 10.)

Kṛṣṇakānter Uil is a social novel. In it there is only one Muslim character; but he is subjected to a cruel and, it would seem from the circumstances, quite gratuitous insult. He is a casual and unimportant character, and the scene in which he figures is in no way essential to the evolution of the plot;

for which reason it is hard not to conclude that the author was seeking to enhance the reputation of a Hindu character by presenting him with an opportunity to affront a Muslim.

> 'What's the singing master doing? Counting pigs?' (*K.U.* pt. II, ch. 6.)

The victories won by the Hindus in the different novels are won against Muslim forces, consisting either of Muslims alone, as in *Rājsiṃha* and *Sītārām*, or with British officers, as in *Debīcaudhurānī* and *Ānandamaṭh*. The Muslims are *par excellence* the foe. They are tricked in several places by superior Hindu intelligence, and routed in others by the heroism of Hindu soldiers, inspired by their divine supporters, Hari and Caṇḍī (Kālī). They are often presented as sub-humans, fit only for slaughter; indeed in *Sītārām* they are likened to the demons whom Caṇḍī destroyed.

> 'The Hindus were charging in all directions, shouting, "Kill! Kill!" To his surprise, Gaṅgarām hears shouts of "Hail, Caṇḍī! Mother Caṇḍī has come!" mingling with those of "Kill! Kill!", and as he looked he saw the form of Caṇḍī, standing in a tree, waving her sāṛī, and shouting, "Kill! Kill!" . . . She looked as if she was standing on the back of a lion, dancing in the battlefield, drunk with the blood of demons, as she shouted, "Kill! Kill! Kill the foe! the foe of God! the foe of man! the foe of the Hindu! My foe! Kill! Kill!" ' (*S.* pt. I, ch. 4.)

Only one conclusion seems possible: the nationalism which Bankim's writings foreshadowed was a Hindu nationalism. Though later, from 1920 on, attempts were made to bring Hindu and Muslim together, 'Hindu Musulman ek ho!' and to interpret the 'Mātaram' as 'Mother India', the mother of both, the enthusiasm with which she had been, and was still being, hailed as 'Mā Kālī', the mother of Hindus, was not forgotten by the Muslim community. Apprehension born of such memories, in the creation of which the writings of Bankim had played no small part, unquestionably lay behind much of the demand for separation which was achieved in 1947. The prophecies of Bankimcandra, which brought a new unity and national pride to the Hindus, instilled in the minds of the Muslims suspicion and fear, which subsequent events did not eradicate.

(*b*) *British.* Bankimcandra's attitude to the British and the British Government in India cannot be determined with quite the same certainty as his attitude towards the Muslims. There were clearly two forces at work: his fervent Hindu patriotism, on the one hand; and, on the other, his belief in, and loyalty to, the Government of Bengal, which he served. The two forces were not often in conflict; but there are in his writings indications that at times he was not sure how they were to be reconciled.

He was for many years a civil servant, employed for the most part as a deputy magistrate. He retired from service with the award of Rai Bahadur, and before his death he was further rewarded by the granting of the high honour of the C.I.E. These awards clearly reflect the official appreciation of his loyal and efficient service. On the other side of the medal must be noted occasions when he was in dispute with British individuals. He is said to have rebuked several Englishmen for indecorous or improper behaviour. He successfully prosecuted a civil suit against a Col. Duffin at Berhampore. He achieved considerable reputation for the measures he took to check unjust practices on the part of indigo planters in the Khulna district. Nevertheless, he had good friends among the British residents in Bengal, including notably Buckland, who paid tribute to him in *Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors*.

The attitudes of his public and private life are fairly reflected in his writings. He was quick to condemn any suggestion of racial pride or repressive behaviour on the part of his British characters. It can be said that his attitude was impartial, in that he only condemned what was reprehensible; but the reservation must be made that in his novels he created only unpleasant Britishers. Foster in *Candraśekhar*, and Brennan in *Debī Caudhurāṇī*, are self-seeking and arrogant.

> 'Would you a Bengali have the impertinence to hang an Englishman?' (*D.C.* pt. III, ch. 9.)

The language is that of caricature, but the author's opinion of the speaker is not in doubt.

By contrast with his opinion of the Muslim, no Englishman is depicted as showing anything but high courage when danger threatens.

> 'An Englishman comes to his senses when in danger.' (*Anm.* pt. I, ch. 8.) 'If the Muslims see a single cannon ball coming, the whole lot of them run away. If a whole shower of cannon balls fall not a single Englishman will run away.' (*Anm.* pt. I, ch. 10.)

With regard to the British Government in India, he states without any equivocation or reservation that it was a necessity and an undoubted benefit to Indians, and to the cause of Indian nationalism. Nationalism could grow only in the conditions of peace and good order which the British had given to India. The very concept of freedom, as has been noted above, he attributed to British teaching and British character and modes of behaviour. The following quotations will illustrate.

(*a*) 'If for a single moment I had thought that your (British) rule would come to an end, I should have thrown my law books into the Ganges and returned home.' (*Bankim Jībanī*, pp. 105–6.)

(*b*) 'The English are India's outstanding benefactors. They are teaching us a new way of life. What we never understood, they are explaining to us; what we never saw, heard or comprehended, they are showing, telling and teaching us. They are leading us along a path we have never trodden before. Among the lessons they have taught us, many are beyond price.' (*R*.II, p. 240.)

(*c*) 'By reading English, Bengalis have learned two new words, Liberty and Independence.' (*R*.II, p. 241.)

The most important single statement Bankim made on the subject is to be found in the final chapter of his novel, *Ānandamaṭh*, of which a complete translation is given. Satyānanda, the leader of the *Santāns*, had just won a complete victory over the Muslim forces and their British officers. The officers were dead, and the surviving sepoys had fled in panic and disorder. To him came a figure, who spoke with the voice of God, instructing him to cease from fighting.

S. Come; I'm ready. But, my lord, clear up this doubt in my mind. Why at the very moment in which I have removed all barriers from before our eternal Faith, do you order me to cease?

He. Your task is accomplished. The Muslim power is destroyed. There is nothing else for you to do. No good can come of needless slaughter.

S. The Muslim power has indeed been destroyed, but the dominion of the Hindus has not yet been established. The British still hold Calcutta.

He. Hindu dominion will not be established now. If you remain at your work, men will be killed to no purpose. Therefore come.

S. (greatly pained). My lord, if Hindu dominion is not going to be established, who will rule? Will the Muslim kings return?

He. No. The English will rule.

S. (turning tearfully to the image of her who symbolized the land of his birth). Alas, my mother! I have failed to set you free. Once again you will fall into the hands of infidels. Forgive your son. Alas, my mother! Why did I not die on the battlefield?

He. Grieve not. You have won wealth; but it was by violence and robbery, for your mind was deluded. No pure fruit can grow on a sinful tree. You will never set your country free in that way. What is going to happen now is for the best. If the English do not rule, there is no hope of a revival of our eternal Faith. I tell you what the wise know. True religion is not to be found in the worship of 33 crores of gods; that is a vulgar, debased religion, which has obscured that which is true. True Hinduism consists in knowledge not in action. Knowledge is of two kinds, physical and spiritual. Spiritual knowledge is the essential part of Hinduism. If however physical knowledge does not come first, spiritual knowledge can never be born. If you do not understand the physical body, you will never comprehend the subtle spirit within. Now physical knowledge has long since disappeared from our land, and so true religion has gone too. If you wish to restore true religion, you must first teach this physical knowledge. Such knowledge is unknown in this country because there is no one to teach it. So we must learn it from foreigners. The English are wise in this knowledge, and they are good teachers. Therefore we must make the English rule. Once the people of India have acquired knowledge of the physical world from the English, they will be able to comprehend the nature of the spiritual. There will then be no obstacle to the true Faith. True religion will then shine forth again of itself. Until that happens, and until Hindus are wise and virtuous and strong, the English power will remain unbroken. Under the English our people will be happy; and there will be no impediment to our teaching our faith. So, wise one, stop fighting against the English and follow me.

S. My lord, if it was your intention to set up a British government, and if at this time a British government is good for the country, then why did you make use of me to fight this cruel war?

He. At the present moment the English are traders. Their minds are set on amassing wealth. They have no desire to take up the responsibilities of government. But as a result of the rebellion of the Children, they will have to; because they will get no money if they do not. The rebellion took place to make the English ascend the throne. Come with me now. Know and you will understand.

S. My lord, I do not desire knowledge. It cannot help me. I have vowed a vow, and I must keep it. Bless me, and let me not be shaken in my devotion to my mother.

He. Your vow is fulfilled. You have brought fortune to your mother. You have set up a British government. Give up your fighting. Let the people take to their ploughs. Let the earth be rich with harvest and the people rich with wealth.

S. (weeping hot tears). I will make my mother rich with harvest in the blood of her foes.

He. Who is the foe? There are no foes now. The English are friends as well as rulers. And no one can defeat them in battle.

S. If that is so, I will kill myself before the image of my mother.

He. In ignorance? Come and know. There is a temple of the mother in the Himalayas. I will show you her image there.

So saying, He took Satyānanda by the hand. What incomparable beauty! In the dim light, in the deep recesses of Viṣṇu's temple, two human forms radiant with light stood before a mighty four-armed figure. One held the other by the hand. Who held the hand; and whose was the hand he held? Knowledge was holding Devotion by the hand;

> Faith that of Action; Self-sacrifice that of Glory; Heavenly Joy that of Earthly Peace. Satyānanda was the Earthly Peace; He was Heavenly Joy. Satyānanda was Glory; He was Self-sacrifice.
>
> And Self-sacrifice led away Glory. (*Anm.* pt. IV, ch. 8.)

Bankim's philosophy is, to me, in part incomprehensible, especially in the last paragraph; but the chapter as a whole does reveal the conflict in the mind of the author. Fired by the enthusiasm of his own creation, his heart speaks with Satyānanda, even while he is sure that he is wrong. Nirad Chaudhuri says of it that 'it was, however agonising, only the submission of illusion to truth'. That may be so; but it was not the submission of patriotism to expediency, because the way of patriotism, as Bankim saw it, was along the road which only the British could build.

Other interpretations of the whole novel and of this last chapter have however been put forward; and as they reveal what Bengalis say to one another in conversation about *Ānandamaṭh* they are important. *NCC* (p. 429) quotes the following:

> 'Contemporary and later readers argued, although nobody had the courage to put down the opinion in black and white, that the apparent argument of the book was not its real argument, that Chatterji was concerned really to initiate his countrymen in the doctrine and technique of revolutionary insurrection, and had introduced the peroration about British rule only as an afterthought, as a plea of good faith in case the British rulers took it into their head to prosecute him for preaching sedition.'

Chaudhuri condemns this view on the ground that 'it attributes the worst cowardice, deception and chicanery' to one of the greatest teachers. He is right. It is a gross calumny; for the arguments Bankim put forward in this so-called peroration are consistent with the rest of his teaching. Nevertheless, the opinion has been uttered by more than one person; and it is therefore a fact of history which the historian must endeavour to assess. Unbelievers can quote scripture to justify their own behaviour; but it is still scripture that they quote. *Bande Mātaram* has been chanted during the enactment of some grim scenes, which Bankim could never have foreseen, and which he would probably have condemned; but the words of the song were his, and his authority could be invoked for the singing of them in despite of his intentions.

Bankim's attitude to the British can be briefly summarized as follows:

(*a*) British rule is necessary for India, which can only profit by it. Its establishment is no affront to Indian feelings because it was made possible by the defeat of the Muslim kings by the Indians themselves.

(*b*) British rule is friendly. It will provide the opportunities for growth that India needs. It can supply India with the knowledge it needs, and establish conditions of peace in which Hinduism can revive.

(c) British rule will continue until Hinduism is purified, and until Hindus are 'wise, virtuous and strong'.

Bankimcandra was not the 'creator of Hindu nationalism', as Nirad Chaudhuri claims, if by 'creator' is meant that the various trends that went to the building up of a nationalistic movement all found their origin in him. They did not: there had been stirrings of heart and mind in Bengal before he was known, and some before he was born. Such expressions were, however, isolated, because there was no body of opinion ready to receive them, and inarticulate, because the Bengali language was not yet in possession of a popular and established prose idiom. Michael Madhusudan Datta had spoken one powerful word in praise of the mother tongue; but it was a single poem only, and silence followed. Even so, it was received with such warmth that it was clear that the hour was growing propitious to the expression of such sentiments; and within a few years Bankim issued the first number of *Banga Darśan*. The prophet's utterance changed the outlook of the middle-class Bengali, and later that of the 'common people'. His novels and essays, but chiefly his novels, awoke in the people of Bengal a rising consciousness of power, of pride in their language, in their literature, in their religion, and most of all in themselves. They began to sense that leadership in India no longer derived from the examples of foreigners, or of the dead heroes of Rājputāna and Mahārāstrā, but was to be found in men who lived in Bengal and spoke their own language, Bengali. Bengal was beginning to think and say first what India would be thinking and saying later. And from Bengal, from Bankim's pen, came the *mantra*, the slogan of *svarāj*, *Bande Mātaram*. Yet it needs to be emphasized that the immediate effect was only psychological. There was then no programme for a nationalistic campaign. Certainly Bankim had none; and it is doubtful whether he ever conceived the possibility of one, or, for that matter, whether he would have joined it if it had existed.

Finally, the importance of Bankimcandra's contribution to the growth of nationalistic sentiment in Bengal must not be sought primarily in the quality of greatness in his message, or part of his message, though for the Bengali greatness was there in superabundance, but rather in the fact that he was born to speak just what he did speak at the very period in time, when the ears of his fellow-countrymen were tuned to listen, their minds to agree, and their hearts to respond.

(B) *Writings in the Indigenous Languages*

32. MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING IN BENGALI

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Introduction

Historical writing in Bengali, as in other languages, is closely connected with the development of prose literature, upon the effectiveness of which, as a vehicle of expression, depend to a great degree the standard historical works. Taking A.D. 1800 to be, roughly, the date of the emergence of a Bengali prose literature, we find that it is not until nearly half a century has elapsed that we come across any literature strictly deserving the name. Bengali historiography presents a very similar picture. We have to plod wearily through a mass of indifferent writings before we come across even half a dozen works of tolerable standard during the early stages of historiography.

The immediate effect of the political and social vicissitudes of the second half of the eighteenth century was extremely disappointing from the viewpoint of literature and history. A few isolated writers of the old style, the authors of *Pāñcāli* and the host of inferior imitators of Bharatchandra were, no doubt, still in the field. But the decadence of this class of writers was apparent and the need for an external stimulus, which alone could have given a new lease of life to the declining literature, was keenly felt. This much-needed impetus came during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the rich and the plentiful literature of the West was made accessible to the newly arising and western-educated middle-class of Bengal. By the beginning of that century as a result of the impact of western education, the old order was changing, yielding place to the new. A new literature, a new spirit, and a new order of society were gradually taking the place of the time-honoured institutions of the past. It is at this stage that we find the starting point of Bengali historiography.

1. *The Period of Imitation, A.D. 1800–75*

The beginning in modern historical writing in Bengali prose was made in A.D. 1801 by one of the Pandits of the Fort William College, Ram Ram Basu, a perfect master of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit. His book *Rājā Pratāpāditya Carita*[1] (Biography of Pratapaditya, 1801) is claimed to have been 'composed from authentic documents'. In spite of its occasional aberrations due to a too-hasty sifting of gossip and fact, it can legitimately find a place in historiography. Occasional touches of exaggeration or fancifulness, peculiar to Persian scholars of the day, are there, but these are pardonable in view of the truly historical spirit noticeable, on the whole, in this pioneer work. Its linguistic leanings towards Persian were the subject of adverse criticism by Long in 1850.[2] But the influence of Persian was inevitable in that age, and in his case more so because his materials were drawn from Persian manuscripts. In the description of domestic or emotional scenes (for instance, Basanta Roy's murder), however, Ram Basu used more Sanskrit words than Persian. It was, again, the first attempt at sustained Bengali prose, and the author, without a model, wrote for readers to whom he was undoubtedly intelligible. The book was translated into Marāthī in 1816.

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[1] A new edition of the book, after long being out of print, was brought out by Nikhilnath Roy under the auspices of *Sāhitya Pariṣat* in 1904.

The next to make a significant contribution to the development of historiography was Mrtyunjay Bidyālānkār, for many years the chief Pandit of the College of Fort William, whose literary labours embrace almost the whole of the decade 1800–13. His book *Rājāvali* (The History of Kings, 1808) deals with the rulers from the earliest times to the occupation of the country by the British. The work is based mostly on traditions and the accounts of rulers are not always purely historical owing to a considerable infusion of folk-tales and fictions. But the story presented is a connected one and the style, on the whole, is marked by narrative ease and simplicity. The author shows a decided leaning to Sanskrit words, and thus makes a departure from Ram Ram Basu; the preponderance of Sanskrit, in some serious portions of the work, makes the style stiff and somewhat unnatural.

A considerable impetus to historical writing in Bengal was given at this stage by the missionary J. C. Marshman's voluminous writings on various subjects, in both English and Bengali. His book, the *History of Bengal*, was translated by Gobind Chunder Sen in 1840 and appeared under the title *Bāṅgalār Itihāsa*. The work practically leaves pre-Muslim Bengal out of consideration. Another book of Marshman, his *History of India* [from the earliest times to the Lodi dynasty and the Portuguese settlement] was translated by Gopal Lal Maitra in 1840, under the patronage of the General Committee of Public Instruction, and was dedicated to Sutherland, formerly its Secretary. Marshman introduced Hindu mythical and legendary accounts in the first few pages, and then made rationalistic attacks on them, with the purpose, it appeared to Gopal Maitra, of discrediting Hindu religion. The translator adds a note at the end of the book, drawing the reader's attention to some fantastic stories in the religious books of the Christians, as a sort of negative defence of the Puranas and the legends.

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[2] *Calcutta Review* (1850), p. 134.

This reaction of Bengali writers to the works of English writers—Mill, Ward, Marshman, etc.—is also noticeable, even at this early stage, in a book, *Bhāratavarṣher Itihāsa* (History of India, 1859), by Kedar Nath Datta (probably a school teacher), claimed by the author in his letter to J. Long as 'the first original work of its kind' and as being written with a 'free pen and unprejudiced mind'. The author was out to dispel the wild notions of the English writers and 'strenuously to impugn' their misinterpretation of Hindu character and manners. That the attempt was a serious one is proved by the fact that 80 out of 135 pages of the book are devoted to the Hindu period, from the creation, according to the Puranas, down to the Magadhan dynasty. This section ends with a summary of the Religion and Science, Art and Literature, Industries and Commerce of the Hindus. The author used myths and legends, very often and indiscriminately. For the remaining portion of the work down to the Mutiny he drew his materials from Mill, Dow, Marshman, Murray, and Stewart. The pen was 'free' to use his own expression but certainly not 'unprejudiced' in writing about the Muslims. The want of a sense of proportion is also noticeable; in a single page (p. 135) the author gives a sweeping account from Meer Jaffar to the Mutiny.

Bengali historiography from 1800 to about 1875 follows more or less the same pattern, and the period may perhaps be called one of imitation, as most of the historians, while of course making some feeble attempts at independent interpretation of their history, followed, on the whole, the beaten paths of the English historians on the subject. *Bāṅgalār Itihāsa* (History of Bengal, 1848) by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, *Bhāratvarṣer Itihāsa* (History of India, 1858) by Nilmoni Basak, or Tarini Chandra Chatterjee (1864), *Ādisūra O Vallālsena* (Adisura and Ballalsena, 1877) by Parvati Sankar Roychowdhury, *Murṣidābāder Itihāsa* (History of Murshidabad, 1864) by Shyamdhan Mukherjee, and many others can be mentioned, as examples to justify this categorization. A slight departure was made by Rajkrishna Mukherjee in his small book, *Prathama Siksā Bāṅgalār Itihāsa* (First lessons in the History of Bengal, 1874), in that it was an independent and concise work offering an unbiased account of Bengal with a decided emphasis on society and the people rather than on Kings and Emperors. The book was a best-seller as a school text and ran into thirty-four editions in twelve years.

2. *The Period of Inquiry, A.D. 1875–1925*

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Bengali historiography passed on to a further stage of development. The educated Bengali refused to take the history of his country from foreigners, uncritically, without a word. The spirit of criticism took the place of blind imitation or half-hearted defence of his religion or society against the foreigners' attacks.

The lead here was given by Rajani Kanta Gupta in his book *Sipāhī-Yuddher Itihāsa* (History of the Sepoy War, 1876), in four parts of 716 pages. Though he depended for his materials in the main on European writers on the subject, Rajani Kanta, nevertheless, used and interpreted them in his own way; the aggressive territorial policy of Dalhousie was vigorously criticized, such characters as the Rani of Jhansi, Kumar Singh, and Nana Sahib were high-lighted, and the brutal conduct of English soldiers was condemned. In language, in style, and in independent interpretation of evidence, the book is a significant historical work of the period. Rajani Kanta's essays on historical subjects, especially on personalities, published in the contemporary Bengali journal *Bangabāsi* were subsequently collected and published as a book *Aryyā-Kīrtti* (The activities of the Aryans). This ran into fifteen editions and was made a text-book for schools by Calcutta University as late as 1919. The sketches in this book are of great historical figures of Hindu India—Rājputs, Sikhs, Marāthās, etc. The nature of the subjects chosen for these two works and the method followed in their treatment prove that the aim of Rajani Kanta was to create and develop in the Indians in general and the Bengalis in particular a national consciousness, a sense of self-respect, and a feeling of pride for all that was good and honourable, chivalrous, and glorious in their country's history.

This spirit of criticism of foreign works on Indian history and of love and appreciation of the good in the country's past led directly to a new investigation of the sources—to what may be called the period of inquiry in Bengali historiography.

The great force behind this transformation was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and his paper *Bangadarṣana*. His essays on various aspects of the history of Bengal published therein, during the years 1874–84, were a source of inspiration to many and supplied the much-needed spur to an enthusiastic and able group from among the rapidly expanding, self-conscious intelligentsia of Bengal. He wrote copiously on the subject[3] and was full of encouragement for those who came forward in the field describing such historical pursuits as an inestimable service to the Motherland. He pressed the whole question with the spirit of a devotee, so keenly did he feel and so bitterly did he resent the absence of a history of Bengal. To him this was a great shame upon the nation and a disgrace upon the generation. It is significant that the themes of Bankim's novels at this stage centre on historical events. All these, as he says in one of his essays, were meant to encourage the Bengali to undertake the research for an authentic history of his country.

The first to respond to the call of Bankim was Akshoy Kuma Maitra, whose book *Sirājuddaulā* (part of which appeared as articles in *Sādhanā*, at one time edited by Tagore), an outstanding piece of historical work, was published in 1897, and at once drew the attention of another dominating personality of the day—Rabindra Nath Tagore. Akshoy Kumar, in Tagore's opinion, ushered in a new era of 'independence' in Bengali historiography.[4] This encouragement had almost immediate results and a quarterly historical journal in Bengali, *Aitihāsika Citra*, with Akshoy Kumar as editor, made its appearance in 1899, from Rajshahi. Tagore welcomed this journal warmly and commented, 'The great day of happiness for us, has, indeed, come, since we are going to rescue our history from the hands of the foreigners and see our India with independent eyes. . . . *Aitihāsika Citra* is preparing a crusade to free Indian history.'[5] Tagore also wrote an inspiring and somewhat emotional preface to the first edition of the journal. The life of this journal was short,[6] but its appearance in 1899, and its subsequent revival, mark the increasing interest in historiography in Bengal, and show that the Bengalis were anxious to follow the course laid out for them by Bankim a few years previously. Tagore's poems, which at this stage, like Bankim's novels a few years earlier, often drew upon historical materials, bear eloquent testimony to the spirit of the age. As if to reinforce this spirit, *Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat* was founded in 1894, for research into another aspect of Bengal's past literature. It fostered, in another field, the same interest in Bengal's past—and some of its publications, by casting light on earlier social, cultural, and economic conditions, directly served the historian.

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[3] For Bankim's essays see *Baṅgadarśana*, Bhadra, 1280 B.S.; Sravan and Magh, 1281 B.S.; Agrahayan, 1282 B.S.; Paush, 1287 B.S., to Jyastha, 1288 B.S.

Akshoy Kumar was quickly followed by a host of writers, whose books embodied the results of research pursued during this period. A select few are mentioned, with short comments on their works, to show the trend.

Rajani Kanta Gupta's *Bāṅgalār Itihāsa* (History of Bengal, 1879) appeared, in point of new facts, as a decided improvement upon all previous historical writing on the subject. Kaliprasanna Vandyopadhyaya's *Bāṅgalār Itihāsa* (History of Bengal during the eighteenth century, 1901) threw a flood of light on the political, social, and economic history of the eventful eighteenth century in Bengal. He brought to bear on the subject a critical and unbiased mind, and a fastidious fondness for accuracy, as well as consummate erudition, in a book of 576 pages. Sivanath Sastri's *Rāmatanu Lahiri O Tatkālina Banga Samāja* (Ramatanu Lahiri and the Bengali society of his time, 1903),[7] centring on a detailed biography of Ramatanu and brief life sketches of over 300 persons (English and Indian), gives a faithful account of the transformation of eighteenth-century society, decadently medieval, to a progressive modern one in the nineteenth. It shows how, under the

[4] *Bhārati*, Sravan, 1305 B.S., p. 370—quoted in Probogh Sen's *Bāṅglār itihāsa sādhanā*, p. 34.

[5] Ibid., Bhadra, 1305 B.S., pp. 467–77.

[6] The journal was revived in 1904 and again in 1907 when it continued till 1913.

[7] Translated into English by Sir R. Lethbridge in 1907.

impact of the West, the education, literature, society, and religion, and the political and economic life of the Bengali Hindus were revolutionized. Rampran Gupta's translation of *Riyāẓ-us-Sālātin* by Gholam Husain (1905) offered to historians source-material in the vernacular.

At this point, in 1910, the Varendra Research Society was founded at Rajshahi, under the patronage of Rajkumar Sarat Kumar Roy of Dighapatia, for an intensive investigation of the source-material thought necessary for the reconstruction of the history of the country. It is an active organization even today and has been doing monumental work in the field of historical research.

Within two years of its foundation, this Varendra Research Society proved its immense value. Ramaprasad Chanda in *Gauḍarājamālā* (History of Bengal, 1912) applied for the first time scientific method to the treatment of his subject. This was soon followed by Akshoy Kumar Maitra's *Gauḍalekhamālā* (The Inscriptions of Bengal, 1912), which brought within the reach of scholars the collections of copper plate grants bearing upon the history of the Palas of ancient Bengal. Both were contributions of the Varendra Research Society of Rajshahi.

This scientific handling of sources, begun by Ramaprasad and Akshoy Kumar, reached its culmination in the hands of the foremost historian and archaeologist of the day—Rakhal Das Banerji. His *Bāṅgalar Itihāsa* (History of Bengal, in two volumes, 1915, 1917), a product of twelve years of sustained research, offering a connected history of Bengal from the earliest times to 1576, surpassed in quality all other works on the subject, written in any language, English or Indian. In the wealth of information which this heavily documented book presented, and in the scientific handling of a mass of materials—epigraphic, numismatic, and literary—Rakhal Das infused a new spirit and a new vigour into historical research and carried historiography a long step forward.

We may note as significant that the range of interest of the historians of Bengal during this period considerably widened. A number of volumes on India or on events of general Indian interest made their appearance. A few are mentioned here:

Harimohan Mukherjee's *Rājasthāner Itihāsa* (1884), Gopal Chandra Mukherjee's *Rājasthāna*, in two volumes (1885), and Baroda Kanta Maitra's *Sikh-Yuddher Itihāsa O Mahārāja Dilīp Siṅha* (1893) reflect interest in the history of the Rajputs and the Sikhs. Panch Kaḍi Vandyopadhyaya's *Sipāhī-Yuddher Itihāsa* (History of the Sepoy War, 1909) is an interesting and informative book, though in some places (e.g. on p. 154) the author's emotion overpowers his judgement. Durgadas Lahiri, who originally conceived an ambitious plan of writing a history of the world in thirty volumes, published, as part of his contemplated major work, eight volumes on Ancient Indian history, under the title *Prithivīr Itihāsa: Bhāratavārṣa*

(History of the World: India, 1909–21). These volumes, running to over 3,000 pages, testify to the industry and sustained labour of the author, but though important in those days, they are out of date in the light of new materials now available on the subject. Rampran Gupta's *Prācīna Bhārata* (Ancient India, 1914), Siva Chandra Seal's *Āryyajātīr Ādi Nivāsa* (The original home of the Aryans, 1922), *Sama-Sāmayika Bhārata* (Contemporary India, 1913–15) in nine parts, and *Varttamāna Jagata* (Modern World, 1914–16) by Jogindra Nath Samaddar and Binoy Kumar Sarkar respectively, show that Bengali historiography was equally interested in ancient and contemporary history.

The interest in biography is reflected in such works as those of Abdul Wadud, Charu Chandra Basu, Ajhar Ali, on Sir Syed Ahmed (1911), Asoka (1911), and Shah Jahan (1917) respectively.

The writing of histories on the districts, regions, and localities of Bengal also gained a considerable momentum, so much did the historical spirit pervade society. The books of Yogendra Nath Gupta on Vikrampur (1909), Bijoy Chandra Majumdar on Dacca (1910), Pravas Chandra Sen on Bagura (1911–13), Nagendra Nath Basu on Burdwan (1914), Ananda Nath Roy on Faridpur (1909, 1921), Mohini Ranjan Chakravarty on Birbhum (1916, 1919), Achyut Charan Chowdhury on Sylhat (1917), Jogesh Chandra Basu on Midnapur (1921), Radharaman Shah on Pabna (1923), Sital Chandra Chakravarty on Tippera (1926–7), and many other works of the same nature covered almost all regions and districts of Bengal. Though not all of them reached a desirable standard, yet there were some that were remarkable for the abundance of their information—geographical, ethnical, genealogical, economic, social, and political—and for their attempts to penetrate into every detail of the region or district they surveyed. The works on Vikrampur, Tippera, and Sylhat are especially interesting in such details.

Though Bengali historiography covers a wide range of subjects at this stage (offering even works about countries beyond the frontiers of India, reference to which is not considered relevant), yet the emphasis on the history of Bengal is very noticeable. This emphasis can be accounted for by a reference to the political agitation in the country arising from the Partition of Bengal in 1905. The movement stirred the educated Bengali mind to its depth and the enthusiasm created by it seems to have been canalized into a serious study of Bengal's past as if to derive strength, courage, and self-confidence from an analysis of the past history of the people and the land.

3. *Indian Political Unrest and the Development of Bengali Historiography, 1925–1947*

The end of the First World War was followed in India by the Khilafat, the Non-co-operation and the Civil Disobedience movements. The Terrorist or the Revolutionary movement, in full vigour from 1907 to 1917, continued down to the thirties of the century. All these movements were followed, as they were in the 1940's, by a Muslim demand for a partition of India and the equally strong counter-moves of the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Arya Samaj, created a situation in the country in which the need for probing into the depth of history was keenly felt by many. Meanwhile, Bengali literature had developed with considerable speed and the language in its richness had become admirably suited to effective historical writing. It is but natural, therefore, that the historiography of the period should bear the impress of the political and national consciousness of the age. Any increase in the quantity of writing apart, much independence of thought and a considerable degree of force and boldness are noticeable in the works of the period.

To understand the character of the works and to form an idea, however imperfect or incomplete, of the trends running through the whole period down to 1947, it seems necessary to take up some of them by chronological divisions.

(*a*) 1925–40. Aravindu Ghosh's *Bhārater Navajanma* (Indian Renaissance, 1925) drew attention to the unconquerable spirit that was India's, capable of withstanding centuries of foreign government. He felt the re-emergence of an Indian soul, and called the period one of Renaissance, not strictly in the European sense but in the sense of the revival of that indestructible and dominating Indian spirit. Bhupendra Nath Datta, himself once a revolutionary, in his *Aprakāśita Rājanaitika Itihāsa* (The Unrevealed Political History of India, 1926) suggested that the Revolutionary movement was a significant phase in the nation's life. It was not exotic, and its genesis, to be understood, required a close study of the preceding eighty years of Bengal's history. He showed how, from Ram Mohan's time, society moved from one stage of radicalism to another, and how the emotional, imaginative, and sensitive Bengalis were quick to accept radicalism. The failure of the movement, he maintained, was due to a want of a capable leader—a superman, to guide the revolutionaries. Nalini Kishor Guha's *Bāṅgālāi Viplavavāda* (Revolutionary Movement in Bengal, 1923), while presenting a narrative, not strictly chronological, of the movement in Bengal (1906–1917), attempted with tolerable success to connect it historically with the nineteenth-century Reform movements. The free mind, according to him the product of that century, made possible the growth of a revolutionary spirit in Bengal.

Pramatha Nath Mukherjee's *Itihāsa O Abhivyakti* (Philosophy of History, with especial reference to the cultural life of Ancient India, 1929) started with an organic conception of civilization and analysed the religion, philosophy, and culture of ancient India in the context of the civilization of other peoples. The book is rather stiff from both the stylistic and analytical points of view, and while there is much to appreciate in his thesis, there are failings here and there, as in pp. 483–6, where the author makes an attempt to give us the impression of hidden scientific truth in the mythical or legendary accounts of the Puranas or in the Vedic hymns.

Hindūr Navajanma (The New Awakening of the Hindus, 1931) by Digindra Nath Bhattacharyya (Vice-President, Bengal Provincial Mahasabha) is a significant book, bearing strikingly the impress of the Arya Samaj. The author went to the origin of caste in ancient India, traced its development historically, condemned its rigidity, pointed out its hollowness, and drew the attention of his readers to the grave danger that faced Hinduism because of the division of its followers caused by caste. The outcastes and the untouchables, he maintained, were filling the ranks of the Muslims and Christians, and he showed by calculation that Hinduism would disappear in 460 years if this process continued. He offered, as his solution to the problem, the abolition of the curse of the caste system, the introduction of widow re marriage, and the immediate launching of an effective programme for the reconversion of converted Muslims and Christians.

A departure from this class of historical literature of an emotional and propagandist nature was made by Kshitinnatan Sen in his balanced work *Bhāratīya Madhyayuge Sadhanār Dhārā* (The Ideal of Medieval India, 1930). The author, in a convincing style, urged that the great ideal of Medieval India had been to bring about the unity of man and man, and showed how the conception of equality and brotherhood of mankind was dominant in all great medieval reformers of India—Ramannj, Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya. The future greatness of India, therefore, rested in the realization of this great ideal.

Not all the history written at this time was thus politically inspired. The tradition of collecting source-materials was still kept up. *Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali* (The Inscriptions of Kamarupa, 1931), a valuable adjunct to *Gauḍalekhamālā*, is an example to the point.

Dinesh Chandra Sen's *Vṛhatvaṅga* (Greater Bengal, 1935), though not a historical work in the strict sense of the term, offered to historians much untested literary material for historical writing.

Asit Kumar Haldar's *Bhārater Śilpa Kathā* (A History of Art, Architecture, Sculpture and Painting of India, 1939) is a remarkable book. The history of the development of these branches of Indian knowledge from prehistoric to modern times against the spacious background of geography, religion, tradition, and custom, with a short comparative note on Indian and Western art, was here presented in a very attractive and pleasing style. The influences of India on the art of Tibet, Nepal, China, Japan, and South-east Asian countries were shown, without, however, breaking the main narrative. A time-chart of main trends, some drawings and photographic reproductions, and a short but select bibliography lend special importance to the book.

A few more works such as *Prāgaitihāsika Mohenjodāro* (Prehistoric Mohenjo-Daro, 1936) by Kunjagovinda Goswami, *Andhakūpa Hatyā Rahasya* (The Mystery of Black Hole, 1938) by Mujibur Rahman, and *Aśoka* (1940) by Surendra Nath Sen, may also be referred to, to show the wide range of interests in the period.

However, the bulk of historical writing was clearly inspired by nationalism. Thus, there was an amazing outpouring of biographical studies, written with the overt intention (as the prefaces of many show) of creating a national consciousness in the rising generation in Bengal by an appraisal of the heroic activities of some of the great historical figures of the country. Purna Chandra Bhattacharyya's *Bāṅgalār Vīra* (The Heroes of Bengal, 1927) and *Iśā Khān* (1927), Sachi Kanta Datta's *Bāṅgalār Vīra* (1928), Kaliprasanna Das's *Bāṅgalār Vīra* (1930) and Chandra Kanta Datta's *Bāṅgalār Vīra* (1927), *Bāṅgalār Vīrāṅganā* (Heroines of Bengal, 1931) and *Pratāpāditya* (1931) are, though of definitely inferior standard, examples to the point. These writers, without any claim to originality or distinction, were themselves inspired by the political, swadeshi, and terrorist movements of the day and served as a constant source of inspiration to those who took active parts in them.

The significant paucity of historical works by Bengali Muslims during this period needs some explanation.

The Muslims of Bengal, for various reasons, took to western education much later than the members of the sister community, and later, when they did join English schools, they found it difficult to master the Bengali language, which had by then become highly Sanskritized. The Wahabi and Faraizi movements in Bengal were also to some extent responsible for the growth of a spirit of indifference in Muslim society for everything un-Islamic. Again, in the period under discussion, Pan-Islamism and the Khilafat, with its corollary in the exodus movement (*hijrah*), turned the Muslim mind from India to countries of Islam beyond the frontier. Thus, while we have historical literature by Bengali Muslims on Islam, Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Afghanistan, etc., we have very few works from Muslims on Bengal or India.

(*b*) 1940–7. From 1940 onwards a remarkable emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of the country's history is the most noticeable element in Bengali historiography. This emphasis, though it does not imply neglect of other aspects of history, remains a dominating one even today.

Tapan Mohan Chattapadhyaya's book *Palāśīr Yuddha* (Battle of Plassey, 1942) is delightful reading. It is not merely an account of a battle; in it the author successfully answers for his readers the 'why' and 'how' of Plassey, and discusses the direct and indirect results of this historical event.

Plassey, according to him, is the dividing line between medieval and modern Bengal, and also a turning point in the history of the people. The origin and growth of Calcutta, the history of the Company, the development of the 'new Bengali society' side by side with the cosmopolitan, in and around the city, together with the political events of Alivardi's reign, the depredations of the Mahrattas, the Nawab of Bengal's break with the Company, followed by the catastrophe of Plassey, are all dealt with in an easy narrative style.

Sukumar Sen's *Prācīna Bāṅgalā Ō Bāṅgālī* (Ancient Bengal and the Bengalis, 1943) is a small but remarkable thought-provoking book, which gives a compact account of Bengali society and culture from the fifth to the twelfth centuries, with a literary flourish.

Kshitimohan Sen's *Bhārater Saṁskṛti* (Indian Culture, 1943), published under the auspices of Viswa Vidya Sangraha, an organization of Viswa Bharati, is another small but instructive and well-documented book on Indian culture. It shows that although India has always been preaching unity and the brotherhood of men, yet paradoxically Indian society presents a picture of diversity and disunity. The attempts of Indian reformers at harmonizing and unifying the conflicting and diverse groups of men had always failed. The author maintains that it was the spirit of toleration, that great and ever-existent factor in Indian history, allowing free play to the actions and reactions of different cultural forces, which made possible the existing cosmopolitan culture of India. The most progressive and the most retrogressive trends, because of the same spirit of toleration, exist side by side in India—a state of affairs without a parallel in world history. Another book of the same author and in the same series, *Jātibheda* (The Evolution of Caste, 1946), embodies his research on the subject. In a lucid and persuasive manner he makes his point that the rigidity of the caste system was a late development, that it was non-Aryan rather than Aryan in origin, and that on ultimate analysis it is unsupported, in its present form, by religious literature. The rigidity of caste, he maintains, made possible the foreign domination of the country (pp. 196–7). Both books were published at a time when Indian politicians were facing the problem of disunity in the country.

Bhupendra Nath Datta's *Bhāratīya Samājapaddhati* (Studies in Indian Social Polity, 1944) is yet another book of the period bearing the impress of the political condition of the India of the day. Writing with the idea of giving a new sociological interpretation of the formation of Hindu social polity, the author attempted to modify the views of the Orthodox Indologists and Orientalists who regarded 'caste' as a peculiar Indian social phenomenon and ascribed its origins to the struggle between the white Aryans and the black non-Aryans. He also analysed briefly the Muslim and the Christian societies and maintained that, behind the manifold diversities that were apparent in Indian society, lay the ethnic and cultural unity of the Indians. The differences were the products of ages, wrought by the constant political revolutions of centuries. He had no doubt that India was passing through a common phase of historic-cultural evolution which would ultimately give rise to one nation.

The most remarkable production of the period is, however, *Bāṅgalā Deśer Itihāsa* (History of Bengal, 1945) by Ramesh Chandra Majumdar. The author writes with objectivity, clarity, and precision. Combining historical scholarship with literary elegance, he presents in a masterly way the political, social, economic, and religious history of ancient Bengal. By showing the process of the assimilation of different ethnical, religious, or social groups in Bengal, at different stages of their history, he makes the point that the people of ancient Bengal were a nation. The chapter on the language and literature, which, according to him, is one of the cementing bonds of nationalism, and that on art and sculpture, considerably increase the value of the work. Majumdar's book, a product of scholastic maturity, improved upon Rakhal Das Banerji's in point of language, style, and presentation of the narrative.

The Muslim interpretation of Indian history, in the context of their demand for Pakistan, at this stage deserves attention. Leaving out of consideration the large number of pamphlets, essays, or booklets which I have ploughed through and to most of which great propaganda value for a political cause can be rightly attached, reference can be made to Mujibur Rahman's *Pākistān* (1942). This book presented a historical case for Pakistan by an interpretation of past events in Indian history, showing how the attempts of many previous governments to keep India politically united or to bind up all religious and sectarian groups into one nation had unfortunately but inevitably failed. Geographical divisions apart, on which the necessary stress was laid, political facts were offered in a connected narrative to show that neither was India a united country in the past, nor were the Indians at any point in their whole history a nation.

4. *The Recent Phase, 1947–55*

Bengali historiography after 1947 enters into a new phase of development in a different political atmosphere and setting. It is not possible at the moment to pass a definite judgement on its nature. But it can safely be said that the phase is marked by an emphasis on the social aspect of the people's history. The ever-increasing number of non-professional historians, dealing with the economic, social or cultural life of Bengal and India, is also a marked characteristic of the age. At this stage, again, the dream of a long line of nationalist historians, from Rajani Kanta Gupta to Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, to produce a detailed and authoritative history of at least ancient Bengal and the Bengalis, seems to have been realized. Attempts at a Marxist interpretation of the history of the country are also a noticeable element in Bengali historiography during this period. References to some books, made below, will make the points clear.

Binoy Ghosh's *Bāṅgalār Nava Jāgṛti* (The New Awakening in Bengal, 1948) is a Marxist interpretation of the social and economic history of the country in the nineteenth century. It presents the socio-economic background of 'the new awakening', and discusses the character of the new class divisions in society and their effects on the Hindus and the Muslims. The chief characteristics of the resultant cultural integration of the two communities are then analysed and, finally, the basic factors contributing to that 'remarkable whole' are brought out and their future historical and revolutionary role contemplated. The mission of the British in India was both destructive and regenerating. The British, while exhibiting a 'remarkable zeal' for destroying the old static, self-satisfied village economy, were yet compelled by historical necessity to do some constructive work, and out of these activities emerged the 'new age'. The trend of this Renaissance, he maintains, is towards socialism and communism.

Saṁskṛtīr Rūpāntara (The Evolution of Culture, 1949, third edition), by Gopal Haldar, is another book following almost the same line of argument. The author believes that behind all the quarrels over language and religion, and over political and economic rights, local or provincial, there was that inevitable and ever-present class conflict, which has been making history by changing the social and cultural pattern of the people. The evolution of Bengal's culture is discussed in the light of these convictions. The 'incomplete revolution of 1947' has brought modern Bengali culture, a product of the nineteenth century and not representative of the people's culture, face to face with a crisis, out of which will ultimately emerge 'a culture of the people, for the people, and by the people'.

Prācīna Bhārater Danda-Nīti (The Administration of Justice in Ancient India, 1949), by Yogendra Nath Vedanta-tirtha, makes a fairly successful attempt to analyse the judicial system of ancient India.

The most important and the most significant contribution of the period has been made by Nihar Ranjan Roy. His book, *Bāṅgālīr Ītihāsa* (The History of the Bengalis, 1950), as the name itself suggests, is essentially the history of the people, or to put it in another way (as suggested by Probodh Sen),[8] 'A People's History of Bengal'. Both in size and in quality it can very rightly claim superiority over all other historical works in Bengal on the subject. It marks the culmination of a process of historical research and writing in Bengal, spread over a century and a half. It is to be noted that while the author cannot and does not claim credit for adding new materials, his success in using them and in giving an independent interpretation of the known data entitles him to rank as one of the foremost historians of the day. It cannot be denied, however, that the appearance of such a book has only been made possible by the patient and fruitful research of earlier generations of historians, and by their success in offering to the present generation a complete framework of Bengal's political history. Unlike the *History of Bengal*, vol. i, edited by R. C. Majumdar (Dacca University Publication, in English), an equally authoritative book, this is the product of one hand, and thus it enjoys unity of conception, and uniformity in style and presentation.

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[8] Probodh Sen, *Bāṅgalār Itihāsa Sādhanā*, p. 145.

The book has its defects. The absence of references to the materials, on which the views of the author are based, lessens the value of the book to some extent, as suspicions and doubts arising out of the narrative must remain unclarified. Again, while the desirability of giving due importance to the socio-economic as against the political aspects of a people's history cannot be denied, yet an over-consciousness in this regard has here resulted in too much emphasis on the former and a denial of a rightful proportion of space to the latter. Only 97 pages have been devoted to the political history of about ten centuries in a book of over 1,000 pages. One wonders if it is not too violent a reaction to the traditional practice and too drastic a cut, not a very happy means of bringing into relief the socio-economic and cultural history of a people. Nevertheless, these shortcomings do not detract very much from the historical value of a really monumental work of its kind. Rightly enough the author, in consideration of the inestimable services done by him to his country as a historian, has been awarded the first Tagore Memorial Prize by the government. One little point demonstrates the remarkable advance made by Bengali historiography in 1950. Whereas in 1839 Marshman's book on Bengal contained only one chapter of five pages on pre-Muslim Bengal, a century of research in the field has now made it possible for Nihar Ranjan Roy in 1950 to write a book of over 1,000 pages on the same subject.

Bāṅgālī Kuna Pathe (Whither Bengalis?, 1951) by Asoka Nath Mukherjee, gives the history of the people from Śaśānka to modern times; the interpretation of history offered makes one inclined to feel that the book is the product of apprehension lest the Bengalis disappear as a creative people.

Radha Govinda Basak's Bengali edition of *Rāmacaritam* (1953) throws open literary source-materials in the vernacular for the Pala period and this piece of work makes it clear that the interest in research, created by earlier generations, continues. It is a considerable improvement upon the English text from the point of view of the interpretation of the original.

Bāṅgalār Arthanaitika Ītihāsa (The Economic History of Bengal, 1954) by Nripendra Nath Mukherjee appears as the first book of its kind, presenting to Bengali readers a critical and connected economic history of their province. Leaving prehistoric Bengal out of consideration, as being too controversial, the author begins from the fourth century B.C. and brings his narrative down to the end of the British rule. The work is not claimed to be a piece of research, and although the author depends for his materials on the existing works on various aspects of Bengal's history, English and Bengali, yet he rightly deserves the credit of presenting a concise, connected, and faithful picture of the economic life of the people, by piecing together available data. But his over-anxiety to allot a fair proportion of space to all the five sections of the book has, perhaps, resulted in a denial of that legitimate length to the British period which in point of availability of materials and rapidity of change it rightly deserved.

The discussion on the present phase can be rounded off by a reference to Probodh Sen's *Bāṅgalār Itihāsa Sādhanā* (Historical Pursuit of Bengal, 1953) which attempts to give a select bibliography of books on Bengal's history only. This attempt proves that Bengali historiography, at least in relation to works on the province of Bengal, has reached the stage of maturity. A historical journal, *Itihāsa*, has since 1950 been engaged in providing a forum for scholars, and is thus a very effective and active instrument in keeping up the tempo of historical research in the country.

33. MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING IN HINDI

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Hindi historiography is a comparatively recent development. Though early in the nineteenth century modern Hindi prose had begun to take shape as a result of the efforts of the teachers of the College of Fort William (established in 1800) as well as those of individual writers, and of the activities of missionaries, it does not appear that much attention was given to the production of historical literature. Some of the earliest writings, such as *Bhāratvarshīya Itihāsa* (1846) and *Itihāsachandrikā* (1847), are translations of English books. Broadly speaking, we can say that by the middle of the century Hindi prose was sufficiently developed to be a vehicle of expression. In the later period Bharatendu Harishchandra and his associates made great contributions to the growth of a prose literature, but historical writing did not catch up with this progress. Writers were largely concerned with the production of school text-books, many of which are translations, and of small biographies which, as a rule, are of very poor quality.

Historical Writings up to 1920

Before describing the nature of the writings of the present century, it is worth mentioning Shiva Prasad's *Itihāsatimirnaśaka*[1] (A History of India in three parts) which passed through several impressions and was also translated into English. Part I deals with the history of the Muslim period, Part II describes the rise and growth of the British Empire down to 1858, and Part III treats of the state of society and religion and matters connected with administration. In his Preface to Part I (written in English) the author points out some of the errors of well-known historians like Elphinstone and Marshman, adding that he himself was obliged to have recourse to original Persian works. About Part III he says:

> 'My endeavour is in this part to prove to my countrymen that, notwithstanding their very strong antipathy to "change", they *have*[2] changed, and *will* change; that, notwithstanding the many heroic actions ascribed to our Hindu Rajas, there was no such thing as an

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[1] Part I came out in 1864 and Part III in 1873. The Preface to Part II has no date.

[2] The author's italics.

> empire in existence; that the country was divided between numerous chiefs always fighting with each other for temporary superiority; that, notwithstanding the splendour attributed to Muhammadan dynasties, the country was sadly misgoverned, even during the reigns of the most powerful Emperors; and that, although the diamonds and pearls were weighed by "maunds" in the royal treasuries, the people in general were very poor and utterly miserable.'

Again in his Preface to Part III he emphasizes: 'No sober man is expected to go through these pages and again believe in the absurdities of the Purāṇas or long for one of the old régimes. This of course seems very hard upon those who always tune their pipes with the praises of the Muhammadan Empire, and have nothing but to find fault with the Government of the day.' The author calls himself a pupil and admirer of Sir Henry Elliot from whose Preface to the *Bibliographical Index to the Historians of Mohammedan India* he gives an extract. Writing about the Muslims he says, 'Under their sway no country ever rose in the scale of civilisation.'[3] He deprecates the writings of Muslim chroniclers who 'were actuated by motives of either ambition or fear. They have concealed blemishes and exaggerated good qualities to such an extent that it is impossible to believe even what may be fact.'[4]

I have quoted extensively from Shiva Prasad to let him speak for himself. He was an Inspector of Schools and was loyal to the Government. In the concluding paragraphs he points out the great benefits to India of British rule, such as deliverance from the grip of atrocious social practices, internal peace and security, and the growth of trade and industry. The author believed in the permanence of British rule with which was linked, in his view, the fate of India. And indeed at the time when he wrote few could think in terms of the end of British rule.

Shiva Prasad's history, written in less than 300 pages, is intended as a text-book for schoolboys, although Part III contains a large number of footnotes including extracts from original sources. Unlike many text-books, it has independent views at several places, and on comparison with the writings of this period it deserves a place in the history of Hindi historiography.

The historical writings of the last quarter of the nineteenth century do not impress either by their content or method of treatment. Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha's *Prāchīna Lipimālā* (The Palaeography of India, 1894), however, deserves mention as a book which deals with a highly technical subject, and which also significantly reveals the growing awareness on the part of some scholars of the importance of Hindi.

The writings of the first two decades of the twentieth century again show immaturity and a very imperfect acquaintance with modern techniques of writing history. The themes of several books, such as Govind Singh's *Itihāsa Guru-Khālsā* (History of the Sikhs, 1903) and Hanumant Singh's *History of Mewar* (1904) suggest that still the stories which recounted heroic deeds found favour with many writers. Some books, written from the Arya Samanjist point of view, deserve mention because of their typical approach to Indian history. Ramadeva's *Vedic India* (1911), to which two volumes were added later, but for its nationalist outlook would merit little attention. The author expresses regret at the absence of any systematic history capable of creating pride and vigour in the past. Raghuvir Sharan Dublis's *The True History of India* (1913) which deals with all the main periods, though largely concerned with the ancient period, is a similar attempt. The author seeks to write the book from, so to speak, a *swadeshi* point of view. Enthusiasm, patriotism, and consciousness of the greatness of the past are, says the author, the only qualifications he possesses for writing this book.

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[3] Part III, English translation, p. 58.

[4] Ibid.

It may be pointed out that even the earlier writings of Ojha, who later wrote his monumental work on Rajputana, bear the impress of immaturity. His *History of the Solankis* (1907), in which he makes use of Sanskrit sources, is clumsy in treatment and defective in language. Nandkumar Deo Sharma's *The Rise and Fall of the Sikhs* (1915) is entirely based on well-known works in English. In 1919 the 'Misrabandhus' brought out the history of ancient India in two volumes which contain little either by way of new material or a new approach. The book has all the defects usually found in the writings of non-professional historians. Mannan Dwivedi's *History of the Muslim Raj* (1919) shows how lightheartedly one could enter upon the work of historical writing less than forty years ago.

Historical Writings between 1920 and 1947

Since 1920 there has been a steady increase in the amount and quality of Hindi historical writing. The growth of nationalism in India, which gave a stimulus to independent inquiry, a greater awareness of the importance of Hindi, and the growing number of English-educated scholars who were also well-grounded in Hindi, accelerated the pace of writing. But the amount of first-rate writing for a period of twenty-five years is inconsiderable, though on comparison with the writings of the pre-1920 period it shows maturity in treatment and independence of judgement.

Vishveshwarnath Reu's history of the ancient and medieval dynasties of India in three volumes (1920–5) has some prominent characteristics of the transitional period through which Hindi historiography was passing about the year 1920. Though the author has made use of original sources his method of treatment is unsatisfactory. The narrative is marked by a lack of historical analysis, force, and spirit. In his Preface to the first volume he says that owing to a dearth of books in their own language Hindi-knowing readers are obliged to read books written in English which fail to develop a sense of pride in the achievements of our ancestors. But it is doubtful whether these volumes, lacking in colour and spirit, fulfilled the objective the author had in mind.

Among the important works which have appeared since 1920 Ojha's *History of Rajputana* (1925–41)[5] deserves special mention. This work in five volumes, each consisting of two or three parts, is a monument of industry and patient research and is invaluable for scholars interested in the history of this region. The author took up this work when he was in his sixties and indeed it needed great determination and devotion to learning to enter upon a venture of such magnitude. Ojha was, however, eminently fitted for it. He belonged to Sirohi, a state in Rajputana, was first Curator of Victoria Hall Museum, Udaipur, then in 1908 was appointed Curator of the Rajputana Museum, Ajmer. Thus he had first-hand knowledge of the country about which he wrote; moreover, Rajputana, the land of heroes, of countless battles which provided occasions for unparalleled sacrifice on the part of both men and women, supplied a tempting theme which Ojha selected for his study. So far the books on this subject which had appeared in Hindi had been mainly based on James Tod's *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829–32). Ojha recognizes the great services of Tod who through this work had made the importance of Rajputana known to the world, but since its publication a hundred years ago, new historical materials had come to light and indeed the need for a work using it on scientific lines could not be denied. By making full use of inscriptions, numismatics, copper plates, and literary sources, Ojha made a very considerable advance on Tod's *Annals and Antiquities*.

The first volume deals with certain general matters, such as the geography of the region, the origin of the Rajputs, the history of the early ruling dynasties, and the relations of Rajputana with the Muslims, the Marathas and the English. The other volumes are devoted to the history of individual states, namely, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Dungarpur, Partabgarhd, and Banswara. The author describes their history from the earliest known times to the present, but on comparison with the treatment of the earlier period his account of the modern period is less satisfactory; the references are limited to Aitchison's *Treaties and Engagements*. He would have been well advised to resist the temptation of carrying his story to the latest period. The discipline which the modern period requires of a scholar is in many ways different from that possessed by scholars of the early and medieval periods.

In one very important respect Ojha, like several other Indian scholars, differs from the views of European writers like Tod and Vincent Smith, who had emphasized the foreign origin of the Rajputs. He discusses this subject at length and maintains that they were the descendants of the old Kshatriyas. He criticizes Smith for putting forward views unsupported by evidence. Reu also holds the same view. The origin of the Rajputs is one of the most controversial subjects on which extreme opinions have been expressed by writers of Indian history.

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[5] Many Hindi writers prefer to use the *Saṁvat* era of dating, which, for convenience, we have converted into the Christian era by uniformly subtracting 57 from the former.

Ojha's work suffers from certain defects. First, we do not get an integrated and comprehensive picture of the whole of Rajputana. Secondly, he is so much swayed by an attitude of hero-worship that at places he is unable to view things in their proper historical perspective. For instance, his estimate of Rana Pratap befits a hero-worshipper rather than a great historian. Raghubir Singh's estimate, however, that Rana Pratap had narrow aims and followed a negative policy of resistance[6] is more convincing. The freedom for which the Rajputs fought was restricted in scope, but while going through Ojha's history, one may well confuse it with a patriotism embracing the whole country. So long as ancient ideals, customs, and systems of government continued in India, says the author, the Kshatriyas not only ruled over India but also conquered distant countries, but when they became self-centred and indifferent to education and when many castes and religious sects came into existence, their degeneration set in.[7] Such vague generalizations only confuse the issues of history. The fact is that in Ojha's *History* there is a lack of that penetrating analysis so essential to the proper assessment of historical forces. None the less, it is a painstaking and comprehensive study of which lovers of Hindi can legitimately be proud.

In this context of our discussion of Ojha's writings some mention may be made of other works belonging to this category. Rajputana has been the theme of a host of writers. Its attractive story, a comparatively easy availability of sources, and the desire on the part of individual dynasties to have their history recorded are probably the reasons for the appearance of this large number of books.

Vishveshwarnath Reu wrote the *History of Marwar* (where he was Superintendent of the Archaeological Department) in two volumes in 1938–40. It is a careful work based on original sources, but not so exhaustive and critical as Ojha's *History of Jodhpur*, which appeared at about the same time. P. S. Mehta's *Hamārā Rājasthān* (1950) is a good general account from early times to the present. Though at many places the author shows a lack of proportion, he has, on the whole, succeeded in presenting the story in an interesting manner within the compass of a single volume. Raghubir Singh's book on Rājasthān (1951) is largely concerned with the main trends, and though such a book as this, abounding in generalizations, has its weaknesses, it is useful as an attempt at a new approach to the history of Rajputana. There are many other books concerning the individual states of Rajputana, but very few of them deserve mention.

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[6] *Pūrva ādhunik Rājasthān* (1527–1947), 1951, p. 77.

[7] *History of Rajputana*, i, 79.

Other regions of India have attracted the attention of writers, though not quite on the above scale. Hiralal's *History of Madhya Pradesh* (1939), though brief, is a clear and reliable account which could become a basis of a more comprehensive work. R. B. Pandey's *History of Gorakhpur* (1946) gives an excellent account of the early period, but its second half is less satisfactory. Raghubir Sinh's *The First Kingdom of Ratlam* (1950) is an authoritative account of a small state in Malwa in the second half of the seventeenth century. Also there are books on Tripuri, Ayodhya, Garhwal, Bundelkhand, Braj and the Punjab. These regional histories are, however, of uneven merit; its treatment of the modern period in most of them is unsatisfactory.

Perhaps the best example in Hindi nationalist history is Jayachandra Vidyalankar's *Bhāratīya Itihāsa Kī Rūparekhā* (Outline of Indian History, 1933) which deals with the history of ancient India down to the age of the Sātavāhanas in about 1,200 pages. No really scholarly work comparable to this had been written before on ancient India. It is indeed the result of great industry and shows independence of judgement. The author had already made his mark as a scholar of some repute by writing a book on the geographical basis of Indian history (1926), which later in 1931 appeared in an enlarged form as *Bhārat-Bhūmi aur uske Nivāsī* (India and its People). In this book he gives a detailed account of the law, the people, and the languages of India, laying great emphasis on the national and cultural unity of the country. The ancient history of India, says the author, is the history of a virile and living nation; it is during this age (up to A.D. 550) that the strong foundations of culture and civilization were laid.[8] He emphasizes that the virility of India found expression in the spread of Indian civilization in distant lands, and in commercial and colonial activities. The Indian scientific frontiers, as determined by the author on the basis of ancient sources, include Nepal, Ceylon, and Afghanistan. He also stresses the importance of Hindi, the widespread use of which is, in his view, evident proof of the internal unity of India.[9]

In his *Rūparekhā* Jayachandra criticizes the approach to Indian history of Vincent Smith and the writers of the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i. He remarks that Indians can understand many of the problems much better than Europeans, for which purpose the Indian languages are a better vehicle of expression. The absence of historical tradition in Hindi was indeed a great obstacle in the way of the author. None the less he has succeeded in producing a scholarly work based on original sources. The author recognizes the services of K. P. Jayaswal who was, as Professor

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[8] *Bhārata-Bhūmi*, p. 287.

[9] Ibid., p. 328.

R. C. Majumdar rightly says, for a quarter of a century a dominant figure in the field of Indian history and was also one of the founders of the 'Indian School of Indology'.[10] The nationalist writers, of whom Jayachandra is one, have brought to bear on their studies an independent outlook, which being partly a reaction to the approach of certain European writers, tends at places to go to extremes. Jayachandra quotes Jayaswal at many places, generally agreeing with him. There is an unmistakable note of a nationalist bias in his writings. Describing, for instance, the success of Aśoka's religious activity he observes that the teachings of Christianity bear a distinct stamp of Buddhism.[11] But in spite of its shortcomings his history is a positive contribution to Hindi historical literature.

Among extreme nationalist writings Sundarlal's *British Rule in India* in two volumes (1929), inspired largely by B. D. Basu's *Rise of the Christian Power in India*, must be mentioned. The author's attitude is unequivocally anti-British. Poverty and loss of character are, according to him, the results of British rule. In his long Introduction he accuses both British and Indian historians of distorting Indian history; the latter, he says, have failed to present reliable history because of their foreign education and mental subservience. He seeks to show that the defect of Indians was not due to lack of courage, bravery and military skill, but to political disorganization. It was the Indian sword, he emphasizes, that conquered India for the British. The broad-mindedness of Indians, unswayed by sentiments of narrow nationalism, the disorganization caused by Aurangzeb's policy, and the Indian respect for treaties and engagements are described as reasons for the establishment of British rule.[12] His estimate of Muslim rulers such as Sirajuddaula, Mir Kasim, Haidar Ali, and Tipu Sultan suffers from exaggeration and an extreme bias in their favour. Tipu is all virtue and one of the greatest martyrs in the cause of freedom.[13]

In support of his conclusions the author relies only on such British writings as are strongly critical of British policy. His book of 1,900 pages contains long extracts from Bolts, Mill, Torrens, and Kaye. But in his endeavour to present what he considers to be a true picture of British rule, he has given only a lopsided account based mainly on secondary books. The whole treatment is unbalanced. He concludes with an appeal to the Indian people to unite and bring to an end the 'unnatural' connection. It may be remarked that a comprehensive history of British rule, embodying the results of sound study, has yet to be written in Hindi.

Among other important historical writings of this period Satyaketu Vidyalankar's *History of the Mauryan Empire* (1928) deserves mention. This is the first systematic attempt at writing the history of this important dynasty, in which use has been made of original sources. Its main defect lies in its handling of the sources. The bulk of the book could also have been considerably reduced if more care and discrimination had been bestowed on its writing.

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[10] *Proceedings and Transactions of the Ninth All-India Oriental Conference* (1937), 1940, pp. 679–80.

[11] *Bhāratīya Itihāsa*, ii, 676.

[12] *British Rule in India*, Introduction, pp. 174–9.

[13] Ibid., p. 492.

Most of the books of this period only incorporate the results of writings done in English. G. D. Tamaskar's *The Rise and Fall of the Marathas* (1930), Raghunandan Sastri's book on the Guptas (1932), and Basudeva Upadhyaya's two volumes on the same subject, are books of this description. Raghubir Sinh's *Pūrva Madhyakālīna Bhārat* (1931) is an attempt at tracing the main tendencies of the pre-Mughal period, but many of the author's generalizations are too sweeping to carry conviction.

Some mention may be made of the monographs on some important historical figures. Nandkumar Deo Sharma's *Shivaji* (1923) draws its material from the well-known books on Maratha history. G. P. Mehta's *Chandragupta II* and Reu's *Bhoja*, both published in 1932, are not marked by any new approach or independent judgement. Gaurishankr Chatterji's *Harsha* (1938) is a good comprehensive account based on original sources. It may be remarked that the number of good monographs in Hindi is very small indeed.

The Indian national movement has been a subject of several books though they are mainly based on secondary sources and indeed when there are so few original books in English one can understand the paucity of standard writing in Hindi. Some contemporary developments, such as the August movement of 1942 leading to the arrest of Congress leaders followed immediately by a sort of general revolt in certain parts of India, and the activities of the Indian National Army under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose, and the trial of some of its officers, have attracted considerable attention. The value of such writings dealing with contemporary events, based largely on newspaper reports, lies in providing some material for a knowledge of the reactions of contemporary India.

Historical Writing since 1947

Since 1947 Hindi has assumed very considerable importance which has been further enhanced by the status accorded to it of a national language. Urdu, which down to the first quarter of the present century enjoyed great importance in Uttar Pradesh—one of the main Hindi-speaking states—has ceased to be a rival. State governments are eager to enrich it by rewarding authors and encouraging its use in numerous ways. English is being gradually replaced in universities by Hindi. These measures have given a great impetus to the production of books in Hindi. The standard of secondary works written for the use of university students shows a marked improvement. A very healthy feature discernible in most of these writings is the note of objectivity. Though books have appeared on different aspects of Indian history, the cultural history of ancient India has attracted most attention. The quality of writing is also improving. It may, however, be pointed out that though the importance of Hindi is being steadily recognized, scholars able to write in English still prefer to do so with a view to ensuring for their works wider publicity and recognition.

Historical Writing on Culture and Civilization

During recent years the study of Indian culture and civilization has assumed considerable importance and some good books have appeared on this subject. But even before the publication of the more recent works, some attempts had been made in this direction. G. H. Ojha's *Madhyakalīna Bhāratīya Saṁsakṛiti* (A.D. 600–1200), being a collection of his lectures delivered in 1928, is a short and authoritative account, providing a good outline for a more comprehensive work. In Beni Prasad's *Ancient Civilisation of India* (1931) use has been made of original sources, but one fails to find in it a fresh approach to the subject. Rai Krishnadas's *Indian Painting and Indian Sculpture*, both published in 1939, are to be praised as pioneering studies in Hindi. S. C. Kala's *The Indus Valley Civilisation* (1941) is based on the well-known works in English; in its revised form (1955), however, it is more readable. Haridatta Vedalankar's *Hindī-Parivāra Mīmāṁsā* (1954) which deals with matters connected with the Hindu family, is a painstaking and scholarly work. Rangeya Raghava's book on ancient Indian tradition and history (1953) is based on a new approach, but his conclusions, which are mainly drawn from the stories of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, are far-fetched and arbitrary. Moreover, in spite of the author's assertion that the means of production have affected ancient Indian society, one does not find that the treatment of the subject goes along these lines. It may be pointed out that no serious Marxist historical study has yet come out. V. S. Agrawal and B. S. Upadhyaya have written some good books based on an intensive study of certain Sanskrit works. Agrawal's *Harshacharita* (1953) and *India in the Age of Pāṇini* show industry and research, but studies concentrated on a few books have a limited historical appeal. Upadhyaya's *India of Kālidāsa* (1954–5) embodies the results of an intensive study and is informative. It may be noted, however, that both *Pāṇini* and *Kālidāsa*, though in somewhat different forms, had already appeared in English. Motichandra's *Indian Costume* (1950), which draws its material from sculpture and literary sources, breaks new ground in Hindi historical writing. His other work entitled *Sārthavāha* (1953)—an account of Indian commerce and trade-routes—is also a valuable addition to our historical literature.

Some books have also appeared on the expansion of Indian culture beyond the frontiers of India. Ved Vyas's *History of Greater India* (1929), Chandragupta Vedalankar's *Greater India* (1939), and Haridatta Vedalankar's small book entitled *Indian Cultural Conquest* (1948) are some of the attempts, though not original, in this direction. Dr. Kalidas Nag, in his Foreword to Ved Vyas's book, characterizes the study as 'the positive aspect of our national history'.

Ideas and Influences in Hindi Historical Writings

One of the most powerful influences on Hindi historical writing has been the Arya Samaj, whose founder Swami Dayananda Saraswati, himself a Gujarati Brahman, rendered a great service to Hindi by publishing his well-known work *Satyārthaprakāśa* (1875) in this language. The movement contributed to the spread of Hindi in the Punjab and the western districts of Uttar Pradesh. A large number of writers, inspired by the teachings of the Arya Samaj, wrote books on the ancient period of Indian history in which one finds an unmistakable impress of a revivalist mentality. The emphasis laid by the Arya Samaj on Vedic learning and civilization has roused much interest and pride in the history of the Indian past. But in their endeavour to give the most flattering picture of the past, most of them have interpreted facts and dates according to a certain pattern, and authors, both European and Indian, whose accounts are different from theirs, are accused of having misinterpreted Indian history. In his book *Bhāratvarsha Kā Brihad Itihāsa* (Advanced History of India, vol. i, 1951) Bhagavaddatta severely criticizes R. C. Majumdar and K. M. Munshi (both closely associated with the volume on *The Vedic Age*, 1951) for what he considers to be a distortion of Indian history. To call our great men mythical personalities, says the author, is to abuse our ancient *Ṛishis*. Writers of this category maintain that European histories have distorted Indian history and that Indian writers are mentally too subservient to them to take an independent approach. While going through their writings one is impressed by the fact that the authors' approach to their subjects is that of an advocate rather than of a judge. Their interpretations of literary sources are very often far-fetched and arbitrary. Indeed the doubtful facts and dates of early history lend themselves easily to most diverse interpretations.

To the other school of writers who have employed the modern technique of writing history, and who are also alive to the need of bringing to bear on their subject a more independent approach than is found in the writings of most Indian historians, belongs Jayachandra Vidyalankar. His book is partly a reaction against the approach of Vincent Smith and the authors of *The Cambridge History of India* who in his opinion had failed to show a correct appreciation of Indian history. Another writer, Sampurnanand, now Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, says in his Preface to the *Original Home of the Aryans* (1939) that for any Indian dissenting from

European historians it is difficult, if not impossible, to secure recognition. It may be added that recognition is far more difficult if he expresses himself in an indigenous language.

Among nationalist writers of extreme views Sundarlal's name has already been mentioned. He is a strong believer in a composite culture to which both Hindus and Muslims have contributed. He gives a favourable picture of the impact of Islam on India and praises the Mughal emperors, with the exception of Aurangzeb, for their tolerant policy. His treatment of British rule is entirely unsympathetic. In fact his purpose in writing his book was to make Indians conscious of their national weaknesses and of the defects of British rule.

By far the largest amount of good writing done so far in Hindi relates to ancient India. The reasons for this are obvious. First, ancient history, for which most of the sources are in Sanskrit, lends itself to easier treatment in Hindi. Secondly, with the rise and growth of a national awakening in India, the ancient period has come to make a greater appeal to the nationalist mind. An extreme nationalist will indeed always find it useful and convenient to point to the magnificent achievements of ancient India as against those of the West. Since the achievement of independence an increasingly greater emphasis is being given to the study of this period. One may look forward to the appearance of many more books on the different aspects of ancient history.

Reference has been made above to regional histories some of which are indeed of considerable merit. A noticeable feature of most of these writings is that they are largely free from narrow regional patriotism. The reasons perhaps are: first, Hindi, being the language of several states, has tended to promote a broader outlook; secondly, most of the Hindi-speaking areas, which in the ancient and medieval periods formed the hubs of the empires, are relatively much less affected by regional loyalties. In going through these books, which generally deal with all the main periods, the reader witnesses something like the shifting scenes of the Indian drama enacted on a smaller stage.

In a vast country like India with its long history covering thousands of years the regional treatment of the subject has much to recommend it. Sources can be handled more conveniently and intensively on a regional rather than on an all-India level. Moreover, certain sources, more particularly those relating to Rajputana, have their regional peculiarities. It is to be noted that Hindi historical writing deals also with subjects such as the history of the Marathas, of the Sikhs, of Rajputana; but comparatively the early period of Indian history has received a much larger share of attention.

In conclusion, although Hindi historiography is of recent date it has made considerable progress during the last few decades. But the range of study has been largely limited to the ancient period of Indian history and to regional histories, and in the treatment of the latter there is no uniform standard. The discussion of the early period in most of them is more satisfactory than that of the medieval and modern periods. Secondly, although books are being written on countries other than India, they do not show any originality of treatment or independent judgement. But this question of writing in Hindi is indissolubly bound up with the present organization of teaching Western history in Indian universities. So far Indian scholars have concerned themselves with the writing of their own history. Thirdly, some of the best studies such as those of Jayachandra and Ojha have a vitality and originality not to be found in writings which first appear in a foreign language and then are substantially reproduced in an indigenous form. Both of these writers were conscious of the importance of Hindi and showed great self-confidence in renouncing English—the only medium acceptable to established Indian historians. Although conditions favouring work in Hindi have very greatly improved during the last few years, yet the likelihood is that a very large number of English-knowing scholars will continue to write in a foreign language for years to come.

34. MODERN HISTORICAL WRITING IN MARATHI

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The tradition of historical writing in Marathi goes back to the seventeenth century. The Marathi language took shape about the twelfth century and was in common parlance for several centuries before historical literature began to appear in it. Much religious literature written in the language from the tenth century onward has survived. The earlier works are the writings of the Mahanubhav Sect; these were followed by the works of Dhyaneswar, Dasopant, Namdeo, Ekanath, Tukaram, and a host of others. Many of these draw on the stories of the storehouse of Indian mythology—the Mahabharat and Ramayana; a few are philosophical treatises and devotional songs. This religious literature occasionally contains references to social and political conditions and ideas prevalent in the times. But its object was not to narrate an account of the period and it would be incorrect to look on it as historical writing.

The impetus to history-writing came with the rise of the Maratha state in the seventeenth century. Great Maratha families rose in importance at the Courts of the Deccan Sultanates. Maratha troops began to be employed in large numbers in the factious struggles of the Muslim rulers of the country. The Maratha people were becoming politically very much alive and the work of the saints of Maharashtra—their spiritual leaders—gave them a strong feeling of unity with national aspirations. Under the leadership of Shivaji they founded their own state in the western hilly tract of the Deccan peninsula. The state soon covered the Maratha homeland. Under the leadership of the Peshwas Maratha power extended as far north as Punjab in the west and Bengal in the east. The need was felt by the Marathas to record their military exploits and political experience in writing, and this took the form of chronologies, ballads, annals, family accounts, and chronicles.

Several important Maratha families began to keep diaries of important episodes, in some of which they were participants. A few stray pages of these family chronologies have survived to this day and form useful links in the history of the period.

Ballads are the popular way of recounting exploits that captured the imagination of the people. Ballads in Marathi were composed about the death of Afzulkhan, the capture of Sinhagad fort, the battle of Panipat, the battle of Kharda, and important naval actions. In Maharashtra it was not customary to maintain family bards—instead the Gondhalis, a special caste, applied itself to sing the praises of the Bhavani (the national deity of the Marathas) and of her sons who sacrificed themselves in the service of the Goddess.

Much more important than bare chronologies or ballads are the 'Bakhars', the chronicles which began to be written from the seventeenth century and continued down to the nineteenth. A claim made that some of the chronicles were written earlier than this rests on flimsy grounds; the majority were prepared in the late eighteenth century.

The accounts of the Maratha kings, of their ministers, of the great Maratha chieftains and Maratha saints, are the general theme of these chronicles. Sometimes the story is built around an important event in the life of the nation such as the battle of Panipat or the battle of Kharda. Most of the chronicles are written from memory though a few profess to make use of notes and memoranda. Their language is archaic, vigorous, and picturesque, and the narrative is told in a simple manner. The chronicles, however, cannot take the place of complete scientific histories of the period. The writers were typical products of the age in which they lived; they moved in a small world; their education was of a limited type and their outlook narrow. Their attention was riveted on pomp and pageantry of the court and the military exploits of their patrons rather than on the life of the people, their hopes and aspirations and the ideas that moved them. The narrative is often marred by a faulty chronology and episodes are jumbled without any attempt to set them in a causal sequence, thus sacrificing time and space—elements essential in the study of history. Believing in the supernatural the chroniclers often seek for divine explanations, thus sacrificing the rational element. Usually starting with the age of the Pandavas of Hastinapur and tracing genealogies from mythological heroes, they come down to Prithviraj Chavan and then to Rajput kings of Udaipur and their descendants who travelled south and took the name of Bhonsle and became the founders of the family of Shivaji Raja. Good rulers like Shivaji are shown as divine incarnations come down to earth to protect Brahmins and Cows and to uphold the Divine order; the bad ones like his son Sambhuji are depicted as coming to grief for violating the Dharma. According to the views of the chronicles the universe is static; there are cycles or ups and downs in the life of the nation, but the idea of evolution or faith in progress in human destiny is absent.

The Marathas were either egocentric or singularly lacking in curiosity. Though they spread all over India in the eighteenth century they showed little desire to know the history of even their close neighbours—the people of Gujarat, Malwa, or Hindustan; little wonder there hardly exists a chronicle making an attempt to trace the history of the English and the French with whom the Marathas were in intimate contact in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The Maratha chronicles thus, though they form an important source of Maratha history, cannot take the place of solid historical writing of modern times.

The Peshwa's power was overthrown in 1818; with his overthrow came to an end the writing of chronicles. The British now introduced a new type of education which exposed Maratha society to new influences and novel changes. This society had no use for historical writings of the old type. It was yet too early for it to engage in advanced studies of history. What work was done in the field of history in most cases took the form of translations of English text-books. Bal Shastri Jambhekar and Bhau Daji showed interest in the inscriptions of ancient India, but they were exceptions rather than the rule.

Maratha history in the meanwhile was attracting the attention of British officers in India. Malet, the British Resident at the Peshwa's Court, often refers in his correspondence to a history of the Maratha people which he had planned and was working on. Malet's book was presumably not completed, but in 1781 a German scholar, Springel, and in 1810 Scott Waring, published histories of the Marathas. But more authoritative was the *History of the Marathas* by Grant Duff, published in 1826. For about half a century Duff remained unchallenged. His book was thrice reprinted in English and twice translated into Marathi. Grant Duff's history became the starting point of historical research in Maharashtra. The urge came from the modern education imported through the newly established universities and from the awakening nationalism. Though Duff's treatment was sympathetic, he could not help being critical in places. His disparaging remarks were resented and in 1867 Kirtane published his famous critique of Duff's *History* showing that Duff's chronology was wrong in places and his narrative was sometimes inadequate, misleading and unsympathetic. Kirtane's was not the only voice. Accepted values were being reassessed under the impact of Nationalism and the Maratha press made a vigorous plea for a fresh study of the history of the Maratha people. Chiplunkar's *Nibandhamala* exercised a powerful influence on a section of the public and revived interest in historical studies. A Marathi journal, *Kavyetihas Samgraha Patra Yadi*, made its appearance in 1878. The old Bakhars (chronicles) which were once so popular and were the main historical reading of the public, were revived; month after month through the pages of the journal were published chronicles, family accounts, chronologies, ballads, which the editor (Sane) collected from old families and edited by adding explanatory notes.

The *Kavyetihas Samgraha* stopped publication in 1890. It had succeeded in creating popular interest in the study of history of the past from old sources and shown the possibility of garnering rich source materials that lay scattered all over Maharashtra. From chronicles to contemporary documents was a logical step and this was taken when Rajwadé and Kharé stepped in to carry forward the work of the journal. The journal had already published a bunch of original documents.

Rajwadé, impressed by the work of European scholars on manuscript records, became a fanatical convert to Lamartin's slogan 'no document—no history' and started the drive for collecting and printing old papers, which has not yet abated.

With Rajwadé began in Maharashtra the age of documents. He was himself a penniless scholar, but this he more than made up for by his devotion and the demoniacal energy with which he threw himself into the work. His wanderings in search of historical materials took him to far-off places in Maharashtra and outside. He visited villages, mosques, temples, hill forts and caves. From old royal families and clerical houses, from jagirdars and grocers, from priests and peasants he would beg, borrow or steal old documents. These he copied, edited, and printed at his own cost. With money borrowed from friends he poured out year after year his volumes of *Marathyanchya Itchasachi Sadhanen*—'Sources of the History of the Marathas'. These volumes contain old documents with the editor's explanatory notes and comments, prefaced by learned introductions discussing vexed problems of Maratha history and historiography. The materials published by Rajwadé range from documents of Shivaji's time to those of the last Peshwas. Rajwadé died in 1926. He has been aptly described as 'the greatest discoverer, the life-long searcher, the exclusive devotee without a second love, the most fruitful collector of the raw materials of Maratha history and at the same time their most painstaking editor'. Despite his eccentricities and his racial prejudices, it is no exaggeration to say that Rajwadé 'revolutionized historical methodology in the Deccan and in other parts of India as well'.

Vāsudeo Shāstri Kharé was another contemporary of Rajwadé doing work in the same field. Kharé taught in a school in Miraj. He was fortunate in getting access to the records of the Patwardhan chiefs of Miraj. These chiefs were the Peshwa's close associates and principal helpmates from 1760 to 1800 and their records contain first-class original material in the form of letters and dispatches sent by their agents and clerks from Poona and other places. From these records Kharé in his lifetime published twelve volumes of 500 pages each. After his death in 1925 his work was continued by his son and three more volumes were added.

Rajwadé was a scholar and historian *par excellence*, but his analysis and interpretations often lead to fanciful theories. Kharé was more sedate if less picturesque. He has no daring theories to enunciate—he limited himself in his introductions to a simple narrative as gathered from the documents. His introductions were later published in a collected form and offer a sober account of the post-Panipat period of Maratha history.

Yet a third contemporary of Rajwadé was Rao Bahadur Parasnis of Satara. He had not the intellectual powers of Rajwadé, nor the method of Kharé—yet he won for his work prestige and government recognition which both of his contemporaries lacked. While only twenty-five he published the life of the Rani of Jhansi followed by Marathas in Bundelkhand and a life of Brahmendra Swami, but his enduring publications are the two journals *Bharat Varsha* and *Itihas Sangraha* through which he published original documents. These records he acquired from two important sources. One was the family of Nana Phadnis, the great Maratha minister, and the other that of the Raja of Satara. Nana Phadnis was the ruler of the Maratha State for over a quarter of a century. His records had remained with his family for over a century when they were spotted by Parasnis. He purchased them and later published them in several volumes of *Itihas Sangraha*.

Interest in the study of Maratha history and searches for original documents had been stimulated by the work of Rajwadé, Kharé, and Parasnis. It was felt that this work required to be put on a permanent institutional basis. In 1910 the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, or Society of Indian Historical Research Workers, was founded at Poona. The B.I.S.M. succeeded in bringing together a band of workers who would collect historical papers and other useful materials and then critically examine them at its fortnightly meetings. The Mandal has rendered conspicuous service to historical research in Maharastra. It has collected original documents, old manuscripts, ballads, poetry, paintings, copper plates, inscriptions, etc., and housed them in a library of its own. Its fortnightly meetings and annual sessions, its exhibitions, its lectures, and its publications, which now number over two hundred, have greatly sustained interest in the study of history.

Despite the feverish activity by private individuals and institutions in collecting historical data, there was a feeling that the story of Maratha history would remain incomplete so long as the great storehouse of Maratha documents—the archives of the Peshwas—remained inaccessible to the students. These records had been taken over by Mountstuart Elphinstone immediately after his victory over the Peshwa in 1817 and put in charge of one of his assistants. They had since then been arranged and listed and used for settling alienation disputes and claims of Maratha jagirdars and chiefs. On account of these alienation claims an atmosphere of secrecy hung over them and no outsider was given access. About the beginning of the twentieth century Government relented and under pressure from Justice Ranade and other scholars permitted scrutiny of a part of the archives. Parasnis was Justice Ranade's nominee for the work of scrutiny, and in collaboration with Rao Bahadur Wad he prepared for publication thirteen volumes of selections from Peshwa *Rozkirds* or daily accounts. Parasnis also read the Chitnisi section or the state correspondence and prepared copies of selected documents. These never saw the light of day and became just part of the records. In view of the fact that the Peshwa's records consist of 35,000 bundles (papers tied in cloth, not kept in boxes), this was altogether inadequate and there was a feeling that the records should be thrown open to students of history. In 1929 Government in response to clamant public demand ordered a preliminary exploration and put G. S. Sardesai, who was writing the history of the Marathas over a number of years, on the project. Sardesai with the help of a few assistants had the various series of village, district, and provincial accounts examined and checked. The result of his exploration he gave in a handbook he later prepared. His main effort, however, was concentrated on the correspondence part of the records; from these he prepared forty-five selections which Government printed and issued to the public. The Peshwa Daftar series, as these selections came to be called, consist of letters and dispatches of the Maratha envoys and clerks at foreign courts and replies sent to them.

It is estimated that between 1890, when publication of documents began, and now, over two hundred thousand documents have been published in various series by public and private agencies, and the search for documents still continues unabated. With the publication of the documents went hand in hand their critical assessment and the rewriting of the history of the period. The eager interest in search, however, has not been matched by careful study and interpretation. The historical writing done by Rajwadé, Kharé, and others is of a high standard, but much of the rest lacks their deep understanding and is of a jejune character. The main reason for this unsatisfactory state of affairs seems to be lack of proper previous training at the Indian universities. Maratha history has become a tool of national controversies and needs to be resuscitated by introducing integrated courses, not only in political history, but geography, economics, linguistics, literature, social institutions, art and architecture of Maharashtra.

It now remains to recount briefly the historical writing that has been done in Maharashtra in the last fifty years. Rajwadé never attempted a complete history of any subject, but his introductions and the critical essays he wrote on Maratha history, historiography, philosophy of history, linguistics, would fill a dozen volumes. Some of his theories were brilliant, but his prejudices more often than not mar his writing. Kharé in addition to his editorial work wrote a life of Nana Phadnis and a history of Ichalkaranji State. Parasnis wrote three biographies and several booklets, none of them of very great merit. Rajaram Shastri Bhagwat was a strong opponent of Rajwadé and disputed many of his conclusions regarding the Brahmin Peshwa's role in Maratha history. Shivaji, Baji Rao Peshwa, Madhaw Rao Peshwa, Mahadji Sindia, Ahalya Bai, are some of the figures which have attracted biographers, the latest work on Shivaji being from the pen of V. K. Bhave. A few states in Maharashtra encouraged the writing of their histories. Aundh, Kolhapur, Dewas, Dhar, had the accounts published. Military history of the Marathas has roused interest; Modak, an ex-captain in the Gwalior army, wrote a book on the battle of Pratapgad and General Shinde another on famous Maratha battles. Maratha naval history has been attempted, as the historical accounts of Maratha forts; but none really shows a grip over the subject. Only a scholar with a military background can tackle the subject competently, and it will be some time before such a scholar can arise.

Maratha administrative systems, judiciary, social institutions, economy, and culture have been the subjects of monographs in Marathi. Dr. Karve's work, based as it is on original research, is in a class by itself. Dr. Pendse's book is readable as also Mr. Bhat's. The same cannot be said of the rest.

A sympathetic account of the rise of the Marathas under Shivaji, their expansion and their decline, has been attempted by G. S. Sardesai in his *Marathi Riyasat*. Sardesai seems to be impressed by Seeley's slogan that 'History is past politics'. His history throws no light on Maratha society and culture. Bhave's book *Peshwekalin Maharashtra* is marred by his racial prejudices and lack of understanding of the dynamics of social change.

As is quite natural, the rivalry between the Marathas and the English and the defeat of the former have been the subject of a number of inquiries in Marathi. Kielkar in his book *The English and the Marathas* seeks the causes of Maratha downfall in lack of social solidarity and want of a patriotic feeling, but fails to see that the lack of social solidarity was the result of the innate conservatism and caste prejudices of the Brahmin rulers of Poona.

Communist writers in Maharashtra sneered at Maratha history as the history of a decadent feudalism; but a change in their attitude is now discernible. The rise of the Marathas under Shivaji is now being interpreted as a mass movement of the oppressed peasantry against feudal barons and foreign warlords; their decline and fall is attributed to the revival of feudalistic elements in Maratha polity. The Communist inroad in the field of Maratha history is not serious, but their writing is gaining influence. The writings of Lalji Pendse, Sunthankar, Dange, are popular with Maratha readers.

Modern historical writing in Marathi has been mainly regional. Maratha writers are familiar with the problems and the materials are ready at hand. On subjects beyond the boundaries of the province there has been little inducement to write in the Marathi language. English has been the vehicle of university education, of official administration. Research work that is being guided in universities is done in English. Work in Marathi brings little recognition and little reward as there is no reading public for historical writing. Despite these difficulties, histories of ancient India, of Vijayanagar empire, of Gujarat, histories of Rajputs and of the Sikhs have appeared; the Indian Mutiny of 1857 has been the subject of more than one book—the authors insisting that this was no ordinary mutiny, but the discontent of the old order breaking out against the British impact. The history of the national movement has been treated by several writers, principal among them being Jawadekar, Phatak, and Gadgil. Also very good biographies of modern Indian leaders which are part of history, have appeared in Marathi. Ram Mohan Ray, Wasudev Balwant Phadke, Tilak, Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, have all competent biographers; among foreign patriots Cavour, Mazzini, Bismarck, De Valera, Washington, and Lincoln, have been the popular subjects for biographical writing.

The enlightened ruler of Baroda, Sayaji Rao Gaikawad, instituted years ago a series of historical works in Marathi on the lines of 'The Story of the Nations' series. In this series appeared histories of Rome, Greece, Carthage, Iran, Turkey, and France. Much of the work was adaptation of English books, but the books never found favour with the readers and the series stopped. Happenings in the Far East and the First World War stimulated interest in the history of Japan, China, and Europe, and histories of Japan, France, and Germany made their appearance. The history of the United States was published in the early twenties of the present century. The interest in these topics has not been sustained and the work that has been done is not original. As university education advances in India, we may hope new departments to teach these subjects will be opened and will stimulate writing in Marathi.

35. HISTORICAL WRITING IN URDU: A SURVEY OF TENDENCIES[1]

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The interest shown by Indians and Pakistanis in their past is one of the intangible results of British contact, but it is just as well to remember that history has always been a major interest of the Muslim, and modern historical writing in the sub-continent owes much to the tradition of historiography which they created in medieval India. This tradition with its descriptive treatment and dynastic and biographical approach, did not die out with the advent of European historiography, for it continued to characterize the historical literature produced in Persian and latterly in Urdu also throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is true that with the exception of a few, like the *Siyarul-Motaakkherīn* of Gholam Husain Tabatabaī, most of these are either compilations or summaries, and were admittedly written for English officers. For this reason most of these have never been printed and survive only in English translation or extracts.[2] But as exemplifying a form of and attitude to historiography they are important, for early Urdu historical works tended to use them as models. The use of Persian for historical writing did not altogether cease,[3] and in those areas where British rule arrived late, as in the N.W.P. and Punjab, it continued to be the literary language right up to the end of the nineteenth century.[4] After Elliot's survey of Persian historical literature was published, comparative study of such source-materials became possible and European interest shifted from separate individual narratives like the Ferishta used by Briggs, to general histories like Elphinstone's

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[1] 1. Translations or adaptations from English or Hindi or Arabic originals have not been noticed. 2. Books and authors mentioned are illustrative of trends; exhaustive review of all works has not been attempted. 3. 'History' is here used to denote a descriptive or analytical composition relating to past events, personalities or ideas, in which a chronological sequence has been used as a frame; geographical description forming part of such treatment is included; so also biography, but pure literary or theological discussions are not.

[2] For example, Francklins' use of the *Shah Alam Nama* of Ghulam Ali Bhikhari Khan, in his history of the reign of Shah Aulum (London, 1798).

[3] The *Khurshedi-Jahan Nama* of Munshi Ilahi Baksh, for example, was written in Persian as late as 1868.

[4] An example of this transition is the *Tarikh-e-Bhopal* by Nawwab Sikandar Begum, and edited by her daughter Nawwab Shanjahan Begum (1854), which was published in both Urdu and Persian versions.

History of India. Persian histories written in the nineteenth century thereupon fell into obscurity so far as interest of the Europeans or English-educated Indians was concerned. But among those attached to the older system of learning, such Persian literature not only remained popular, but was the only source of historical information.

Urdu historiography began in this context. It inherited a tradition of writing which continued to move away from the growing extent and depth of historical knowledge accumulated in English through western methods of research. Urdu prose in itself was of recent growth. Before the efforts of the Fort William College showed results, it had developed chiefly as a language of poetry. For narrating concrete facts of history, the new prose could thus hardly avoid adopting the form, expressions, and approach of the Persian chronicles which, in any case, supplied all the information. One of the earliest examples of such Urdu writing is the *Arāish-e-Mahfil* of Mir Sher Ali Afsos, of Fort William College, published in Calcutta in 1805. This is actually a very free adaptation of the earlier part, relating to the history, geography, customs, and people of India, of the Persian history—*Khulāsatut-Twārīkh* of Sujan Rai Bhandari (late eighteenth century). This early period was thus marked largely by such adaptations and translations, and a popular work of this type was a summary of the *Siyarul Mutaakhkerin* by Bakhshish Ali Faizabadi (Delhi, 1840).

Traditions of the medieval Muslim historians inevitably impressed themselves even on original Urdu composition. This is evident in the earliest of such works—*Asārul-Sanādīd* of Syed Ahmad Khan, published in Delhi (1847). It is a descriptive account of the antiquities of Delhi—his native town—with drawings of the monuments, together with a chapter on the contemporary manners and society. Though not a narrative account of the past, yet its historical purpose is obvious, and it is clearly modelled on what Rosenthal classifies as local history, an early Indian prototype of which is a topographical history of Mainah by Abdul Huq Dehlavi (sixteenth century). It is not impossible that Syed Ahmad Khan's urge to compile this account of Delhi was reinforced by two similar accounts of Agra (Akbarabad) written a few years earlier in Persian at the invitation of a British officer.[5] In the final chapter of his book—omitted from the 1854 edition on the advice of Edward Thomas—is an account of Delhi's poets, sufis, artists, musicians, etc., together with copious extracts from their writings, as well as appreciations or reviews of the book by well-known writers of Delhi, like Ghalib and the Nawab of Laharu. Such details usually formed part of almost all Persian histories and the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* is a well-known example. An earlier writing of Ahmad Khan, the *Jam-i-Jam*, was in Persian (1839) and consists of a tabulated account of the period of reign, year of accession, birth and death, etc., of every

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[5] Storey, *Persian Literature*, pp. 692–3, Nos. 904 and 905.

Muslim king from Timur to Bahadur Shah, and is an obvious continuation of the *Taqwim* form of historiography.[6]

Syed Ahmad's subsequent writing, however, showed an awareness of European methodology when he prepared for the Asiatic Society of Bengal an edition of the text of Barani's *Tārīkhe-Firozshāhī* (1862). He also published the first lithographed text of the *Ain-e-Akbari* from Lucknow (1855); in 1863–4 he also edited the first printed text of Jahangir's *Tuzuk.* He never wrote any narrative history of the past but two of his post-Mutiny writings—*Causes of the Mutiny* (1859) and *An account of the Mutiny at Bijnour*—provide the earliest example in Urdu of an historical treatment of a current topic.

The growing westernism of his mind in handling historical subjects is, however, best seen in his *Khutbat-i-Ahmadiya*, an extended essay on the biography of the Prophet undertaken in 1870 in England. Although polemical in its approach and admittedly written to refute the points made in Sir W. Muir's *Life of Muhammud*, just published, it marked a significant advance in adapting western methodology in the use of source-materials. Deeply impressed by the progress of experimental science in Europe, he adopted Reason and Nature as his criteria in assessing the literary evidence, which Muir had used rather uncritically and, it was argued, prejudicially. Of the twelve chapters in the book, eleven deal with introductory matter such as an examination of the sources, supernatural elements in the Prophet's life, biblical prophecies, etc., and only the last chapter summarizes the history of the first twelve years of the Prophet's life, in which his humanness is stressed in order to demonstrate the error in Muir's account.

Syed Ahmad Khan, however, did not develop as a historian; after the Mutiny social and educational reform engaged all his creative mind. But it is no exaggeration to say that historiography, more than any other branch of Urdu literature, owes its development, in extent, quality, and direction, to the intellectual stimulus provided by the 'Aligarh Movement' of which he was the founder and leader. On many points of historical thinking in Urdu, that movement is still alive and a discussion of its basic ideas is, therefore, relevant here.

Broadly, these stemmed from the need of the North Indian Muslims to work out a policy of rapprochement with the English rulers and thereby entitle them to participate in the profits of the new system. The futility of the military antagonism of the *Wahabi* attitude was underlined by the failure of the Mutiny. With the Muslim nobility fast losing their privilege and power, the artisans succumbing to the industrial might of Britain, and the professional classes threatened by the dominance of western sciences, the only way in which the Muslim could survive economically was to adopt the role which the Hindu had advantageously adopted earlier in Bengal—the role of a community wholly dependent on, and so co-operating wholeheartedly with, the new rulers. This of course required a radical change in Muslim habit of thought; social, religious, and political attitude had to be given a new direction. Such a community, in breaking away from its traditions of thought and conduct, not only needed a new set of ideas, a justification for its new attitudes, but also, as Professor Cantwell Smith has pointed out, a pride in itself, in its separate identity, in order to sustain its claim for a share in the profits hitherto monopolized by the more advanced Hindu middle-class in the presidency towns.

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[6] Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, p. 126.

Syed Ahmad Khan's efforts embody the demands of this situation. After the Mutiny he tried on the one hand to ease the Muslims' acceptance and appreciation of the new system, and on the other to repudiate the current official notion that they were inherently disloyal. In pleading for a total acceptance of western culture, even the English language as a medium of instruction,[7] he sought to provide an intellectual basis for the rise of a Muslim middle-class, the class among whom, according to his biographer Hali,[8] his ideas found ready acceptance. These ideas were the moral and social code which he evolved out of the western scale of values, and where those values conflicted with the Muslim's pride in his religious belief and his inherited social and moral standards, he sought to resolve the difficulty by reinterpreting the Quranic ideas in the light of his newly acquired nationalism and laws of natural science. In thus presenting Islam as the new Muslim middle-class required it, Syed Ahmad Khan in fact defended and sustained the pride of that class.

The ideological content of this effort, centred at Aligarh and in the educational programme of the M.A.O. College, was formulated mainly in Urdu which, through a resultant richness and flexibility, quickly replaced Persian. That Urdu was the language of only a part of North India was of no ultimate consequence, for in so far as it embodied the cultural needs and aspirations of the Muslim middle-class it quickly gained acceptance among such classes already formed in other parts of British India, in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay.

So far as historical thinking is concerned, this movement initially implied no new ideas such as democracy, social justice or nationalism. Within the outlook of the medieval Muslim historians only certain aspects and lines of thought came to be stressed, interpreted and developed with the application of the technique and benefits of European scholarship. Much in the manner of the 'white-man's-burden-theory' for example, the frankly imperialistic attitude of Muslim historians is traceable in the pride with which the cultural achievements of Muslims continued to be emphasized by Urdu writers.[9] Perhaps because of the movement originating as a rival claimant to the position enjoyed by the Hindus of the coastal provinces, intellectually it favoured a subconscious distrust, jealousy, and even antagonism towards them. Its basic political attitude was loyalty to British rule and ideas of independence were inconsistent with it.[10] Culturally, Islam was its theme; an ardent desire to rediscover and define it by adjusting its essential ideas with the western liberalism formed its keynote. There was an element of argumentativeness in its thinking in many ways resembling the contemporary Arya Samajist attitude of Dayananda Saraswati, a reformer initiating precisely the same trend of thought among North Indian Hindus.

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[7] Hali, *Hayat-e-Jawed*, i, 84–86, 246–7; ii, 113–14, quoted in Baljon, *Reforms and religious ideas of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* (Leiden, 1949), pp. 34–35.

[8] Cited in Abdullah Batt, *Spirit and substance of Urdu prose under the influence of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* (Lahore), p. 139.

To the extent that the defence and re-establishment of Islam motivated this movement it tended to minimize the Indian elements in the cultural history of the Muslim community and emphasize and concentrate on those which brought that community nearer to Islam, the world power, and the dominant world civilization. While intellectually striving to reaffirm the Muslim's pride in his religious culture, the movement instilled in him an awareness of his fallen state, a longing for the glories to which he was an heir. The famous *Musaddas* (1879) or Elegy of Altaf Husain Hali, Syed Ahmad Khan's biographer, mirroring the rise and fall of Islam's world power, expressed the historical attitude of this movement and achieved instantaneous popularity.[11] A more significant piece, from the historian's point of view, was his *Shikwa-i-Hind*, which for its pathos and nostalgic mood touched the Muslim mind very deeply, and has never lost its appeal. The direction to which this awareness led the Indian Muslim is indicated in the opening lines: 'Farewell, Hindusthan, land of eternal spring, for, long have we, as foreign guests, stayed here and enjoyed your hospitality.' Another poem is entitled an appeal to the Prophet, 'to heed the sad plight of his followers, who had once emerged from their home in so much glory but were now in a miserable condition in a strange land'.

Two inevitable consequences were bound to flow from this attitude. The first was the growth of a feeling among the Muslims of living in an alien land, an inability and reluctance to receive and participate in the cultural experience of India's history, a constant pull towards the land of Islam, and to the age when it was a dominant power. Extra-territorialism, already implied in Islam, became an integral part of the Muslim mental make-up. A curious result of this was that he resented any suggestion that the Indian Muslim was a converted native or belonged to native Indian stock by lineage; on the contrary, the renascent Muslims claimed to be immigrants and descendants of the conqueror who came from beyond the Indus.[12] This attitude it is interesting to note tends to find more general expression among those who speak or write in Urdu.

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[9] *Maqalat-e-Shibli*, vol. 6, *Cultural effects of Mughal Rule*—'To conquer another country is in itself no crime; we should judge a conqueror by his civilizing activities.'

[10] W. Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (London, 1946), p. 16.

[11] Hali, quoted in Ikram, *Mauj-e-Kausar*, p. 121.

The second was that the Muslim mind became more responsive to Pan-Islamic ideas. The Muslim countries of the world attracted him greatly and as the living symbol of his world empire, the Caliph of Turkey exerted an increasing pull on this loyalty. The Pan-Islamic Jamaluddin Afghani, who visited India between 1879 and 1882, thus found a responsive audience, and Sultan Abdul Hamid's attempts to organize world Muslim support to counter the pressure of the European powers achieved signal success when in the nineties of the last century Indian Muslims became sharply critical of British imperialism.[13] This development threatened to undermine the basic political attitude of the movement and compelled Syed Ahmad Khan to reiterate the Muslim's absolute loyalty to the English and oppose their growing extra-territorial patriotism.[14]

Historical literature stimulated by this liberal view of Islam is, however, not very large. Biographies, with a frankly didactic and commemorative purpose, chiefly expressed interest in the past. Literary bias generally influenced the selection of subjects, as in the case of Hali, who, besides a life of his friend Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, wrote a reminiscence of the Urdu poet Ghalib and a life of the Persian poet Saadi. This predominant interest in literature accounts for the treatment of the biography, an account not of a growth of a human personality, but a critical appreciation of the hero's literary output, with an emphasis, through anecdotes, of such traits of his mind as wit, humour, generosity, pride, affection, etc.

Historically more important are the biographies written by Shibli Nomani, Professor of Arabic in the M.A.O. College of Aligarh and a close friend of Syed Ahmad. Indeed, his writings, endowed with a sense of history, set the pace for research into and appreciation of Muslim achievements. He was pre-eminently a historian by temperament and taught history to his people, but not knowing English and having been trained in the traditional learning of Islam with its emphasis on literature and scholastic theology, history to him was mainly the history of intellectual and cultural development rather than of the political, social, and material progress of human society. Religion or spiritual values constituted the motive force of history. T. W. Arnold, one of his colleagues in the staff of the M.A.O. College, introduced him to European scholarship, and to the discerned facts of history, but beyond the idea of evolutionary development which he stressed, but could hardly apply to such subjects as literature and theology, the direction of his historical thought was not affected thereby. With Ibn Khaldun he believed in the importance of the environmental factor in history, but his treatment of historical personages or periods is commemorative and idealistic. His biographical approach to history was very much reinforced by the contemporary Romantic School of European historians whose exponent, Carlyle, he read in an Arabic translation of *Heroes and Hero-worship*. A predominant interest in culture and religion determined the selection of his heroes—personages embodying in their life and actions the development of these activities. His first full-length biography of Al-Mamoon was published in two volumes in 1889. It is not the personality of Al-Mamoon as such that induced him to undertake the work; his primary interest was in the cultural brilliance of the epoch, and, as he explains in the preface, 'If Harun had not been guilty of shedding the blood of the Bermekides, the choice (as the subject of this book) would have fallen on him.'[15] This is revealing, for in spite of his claim to respect facts and objectively to delineate both sides of the picture, his didactic and commemorative purpose made him either to pass, minimize, or gloss over the glaring defects of his hero's character.[16] The same moral purpose is apparent in his more popular *Al-Farooq*, a biography of Umar, the second Caliph of Islam (1899), a book which Shibli claimed to be his best. Together with the *Siratun Nabi*, a comprehensive biography of the Prophet which he did not live to write beyond the first volume, and which was completed by his pupil, Salaiman Nadvi, this book has had a very great influence on Urdu historians' approach to Islam's early history. Unlike Sir Syed, Shibli reaffirmed the value of *Hadith* as an essential source of history, although he laid equal stress on what he calls *Dirayat*—the application of common sense and reason in assessing the sources. Although his portrayal of Umar is less apologetic than that of Al-Mamoon, and the former is presented as a man of flesh and blood, liable to make mistakes and occasionally to be swayed by passion and anger, yet his respect for him is profound and unqualified. In the second volume, he gives an enthusiastic description of the administrative organization, using terminologies of the contemporary British Government in India. It is interesting to note that while charity, justice, and efficiency in administration are stressed, principles of democracy and representative government find no mention. Shibli balanced Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's materialistic approach—the use of the principle of evolution, and laws of Nature and Causality—with a deep religious idealism. Thus in his *Siratun Nabi* he eliminates the supernatural elements in the Prophet's life and endeavours to present him as a perfect man, an embodiment of all human virtues and the greatest of all prophets. This conception of the Prophet has since become popular among Indian Muslims. Another work of Shibli was his celebrated *Sher ul Ajam*, a history of Persian poetry, which is treated biographically and arranged in a chronological sequence of culture-epochs.

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[12] See for example, Fazli Rabbee, *Origin of the Mussalmans of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1895), translated from Urdu, *Haqiqat-e-Mussalman-e-Bengala*, and written to refute the suggestion, recently made by English writers, that Bengali Muslims were largely descended from local non-Muslims. This attitude is still stressed; see a letter in *The Pakistan Observer* (Dacca, 26 April 1956) reiterating the thesis of Fazli Rabbee.

[13] Even the Friday Khutba was read in some Indian mosques in the name of Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey; Abdullah Batt, op. cit., p. 148.

[14] *The truth about the Khilafat*, cited in Smith, op. cit., p. 24.

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[15] *Al-Mamoon*, i, 14.

[16] e.g. Mamoon's poisoning the Imam Riza of Mushad, and his general Tahir, is defended on the ground of political expediency.

Exclusive interest in a world-wide Islam thus determined the approach to Indian history, not only of Shibli, who did not write much on India, but, in fact, of all Muslim writers in Urdu. India, or for that matter any other country, had no historical importance of its own, if it did not form part of the Islamic World. This attitude is reminiscent of the post-thirteenth-century Islamic histories in which theological interest had become predominant,[17] and history began with the first year of the Hijrah. The history of the Muslim world, again, was not the history of Islam's decadence, but of its power and brilliance.[18] There is thus a disproportionate interest in the cultural brilliance of the Abbasids, the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain and, in India, of the Mughals; periods of decline or disintegration have found few historians in Urdu. A notable aspect of this interest is that Urdu historians, when referring to periods of decline, attribute this to the abandonment of true Islamic ideals and to an increase of the non-Islamic elements in Muslim Social habits. Another point is an unqualified belief in the superiority of Muslim administration, manners, and cultural standards, and a reluctance, on the one hand, to examine them in the light of accepted world standard, and on the other, to concede even the possibility of discovering merits in the administration, law, and custom of the non-Muslims, particularly Indian peoples. This latter habit of thought was, however, partly due also to ignorance of the researches done on the pre-Muslim history of India, the knowledge of which in the nineteenth century was not as diffused as it was from the twenties of the present century. Although this habit of thought has tended to die out of late, we shall have to note its reappearance in another context.

These factors account for the paucity of Indian histories in Urdu (baring, of course, school texts). Zakaullah's verbose 10-volume *Tarikh-e-Hindusthan*, published in the nineties of the last century, remained till very recently the only considerable attempt to write a connected history of India in Urdu. Because of this, it has enjoyed a reputation which otherwise it hardly deserves. Zakaullah was a product of the pre-Mutiny Delhi College and latterly became Professor in Allahabad. As a close collaborator of Sir Syed Ahmad, he did much to enrich Urdu prose by his translations or adaptations of English books for use as popular reading matter. He was a mathematician by training, and among the 143 books he is known to have written on different subjects only three are on history, including a life of Queen Victoria and a history of England—none deserving attention as original or even informative. His *Tarikh* is, however, important as reflecting the attitudes we have discussed above. It is a history of the Muslim dominion in India arranged under each reign and is prefaced by a long introduction on the definition, scope, and value of history as a science. In this he was maintaining the tradition of early Persian historiographers like Ziauddin Barani, Khwand Amir, etc., whose views he summarizes together with those of European writers like Carlyle, Froude, and Buckle. Erudite as it seems, the preface, however, lacks coherence and one fails to discover the author's own view. Echoing the Persian historiographers he stresses the didactic and utilitarian purpose of history. He is, however, aware of the prejudiced treatment of Muslim achievements in European hands and quotes Sir Henry Lawrence's comment that no Englishman writing the history of Hindu or Muslim rule in India will desist from emphasizing their defects. He quotes long passages from Elliot's preface condemning Muslim rule, and while offering no reply, he stresses a lack of balance in the Englishman's appraisal of India's past and his dependence on the gossipy, ill-informed travellers' accounts. Being mainly a history of Islam, it has no interest in pre-Muslim India, and begins the story from Arabia and the rise of Islam. In an introductory chapter is given a résumé of Islam's expansion, the rise of dynastic kingdoms, their decline, and present condition. Muslim rule is traced from the Arab conquest of Sind and concludes with the Mutiny and Bahadur Shah's exile. A bibliography is added at the beginning of each section, in which besides the Persian chronicles he includes an English history of India, possibly Elphinstone's.[19]

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[17] Cf. Rosenthal, op. cit., p. 128.

[18] Shibli, *Rasail* (Delhi, 1898).

The *Tarikh* is mostly a paraphrase of the chronicles and history is seemingly used to mean a collection of the different witnesses and facts, and not as a correlation, interpretation, or judgement of those facts. As in the Persian chronicles, it is full of minute, vivid description of battles and festivities, with a preponderant interest in matters of war and the court, and the significant is mixed up with the unimportant. Criticism or analysis of causes is hardly attempted. Nor is there any answer or even reference to the western criticism of ecrtain aspects or events of Muslim rule, like the ruthlessness of Alauddin Khalji, or Timur. Zakaullah feels no disgust, for example, at the unrelieved cruelties of Timur and quotes the supposititious *Malfuzat* to prove Timur's civilized, efficient, and just administration. His sympathy for Aurangzeb is unconcealed and stress is laid on his courage, devotion to duty, justice, and, of course, on his respect for the Islamic

[19] Vol. ii, p. 299, quotes from Elphinstone's history of Khizr Khan, the Syed king.

Sharia, and it is only while praising his justice that he refers to the Hindu—'not one of whom was ever forced to accept Islam by Aurangzeb'. The only criticism of Aurangzeb's conduct that he allows himself to make is that he foolishly imposed the *Jiziya*, broke a few temples and issued the ineffective order to dismiss Hindu employees. This biographical treatment is carried along such an absurdly narrow line that in the discussion of Shah Alam and his successors indication of the growth of the English Company as an all-India power is found only in isolated incidents relating to the king. This is also responsible for the perfunctory nature of the treatment of events of his own times; and the final exit of Muslim rule occasions no comment or analysis of the causes.

Zakaullah's mind is, however, revealed in the final chapter in which he tries to answer a question which assumed great political importance in the present century, namely how far the rule of the foreign Muslim was beneficial to India or the Hindus. In spite of his admission that not much is known of Hindu culture and administration—a statement largely correct in his own day—he proceeds to compare it with that of the Muslims. With a complacence typical of medieval Muslim historians but which would have shocked Al-Biruni, he concludes that in administration, law, manner, and customs, in arts, in literature, the Hindus had nothing worth mentioning—at least nothing that could be compared with those of the Muslims whose rule, therefore, brought civilization to India.[20]

This attitude, it seems, was implicit in the outlook of the Aligarh intellectuals. In one of his few writings on Indian history, Shibli arrives at a nearly similar conclusion in discussing the cultural effects of Mughal rule.[21] It was only after he had broken with the political attitude of the Aligarh movement and was led by his Pan-Islamism to an anti-British outlook early in the present century that Shibli could be persuaded by Mahammad Ali, the Khilafat leader, to write a monograph on Aurangzeb (*Aurangzeb Almagir par ek Nazar*, 1912). One of the very few original Urdu works on Indian history, this small book is a defence of Aurangzeb and is based on a reasoned appraisal of the literary sources. It is not a complete history of the reign; certain aspects and events are picked out and explained in order to defend the king from the charges of intolerance, greed, and bad faith. Aurangzeb's adherence to theological rules in matters of state, his deliberate reversion of Akbar's policy of Indianization, his suppression of Dara Shikoh's religious eclecticism, all find warm support, and the Emperor is commended as a Muslim rather than evaluated as an Indian king. This, in spite of his anxiety to evade entering into questions which 'may give rise to national discord',[22] and the authors whom he refutes are the British historians, Elphinstone and Lane-Poole.

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[20] 'Of all the laws of the world, Hindu law is the worst; Hindu lawmakers were utterly brainless people', x, 14; 'in Hindu rule there was no order in Government', x, 6. 'Muslim manners are superior to these of the Hindus; Persian poetry is better than Hindu poetry; the Muhabharata is childish; in music, sculpture and painting Muslims, Hindus and Chinese were equal', x, 17–19.

[21] *Maqalat-e-Shibli*, vol. 6.

Historical thinking of this pattern also found expression in the more popular form of historical novel of which the journalist Abdul Halim Sharar was the pioneer. The dominant note of his novels is the nobility, internationalism, and valour of Islam striving to rid the world of falsehood and ugliness. The achievements of Muslim arms, in Spain, in India, in the crusades, are idealized, and the story element or characterization is subordinated to a romanticized portrayal of the Islamic milieu. Sharar also wrote a *History of Sind during the Arab period* (1907), using mostly the materials extracted in the first volume of Elliot's *History*. Although it adopts the narrative form of the Muslim historians, 'collecting accounts of the witnesses, and marshalling them with the greatest possible completeness',[23] it is yet more critical than Zakaullah's history, with attempts to interpret and evaluate the different accounts, and is altogether a valuable addition to Urdu historical literature. But Sharar's temperament was that of a narrator of romantic tales, though with a lofty moral purpose. Another work of his, an account of the court-culture of Lucknow during the reign of its last king Wajed Ali Shah (*Mashreqi Tamaddun Ka Akheri Bahaṛ*), is a wistful description of a vanishing age and has the quality of a novel.

From the second decade of the present century historical writing in Urdu, as in other Indian languages, began to reflect more directly the moods occasioned by political issues. Pan-Islamic fervour made the Muslim anti-British and responsive to the Congress ideals of nationalism and political freedom. Hindu-Muslim unity being a prerequisite for these objectives, it was necessary on the one hand to discover and emphasize the points of friendship and co-operation between the two communities in the past, and on the other, to explain away such facts of history which vitiate Hindu-Muslim relations. Since Britain was the common target of attack the unashamed jingoism of Elliot's preface to his *History* came in quite handy and sinister design of the British historians was blamed for such biased, uncomfortable presentation of their past. There were subsidiary complicating issues also—the Arya Samajist's aggressive Hindu revivalism, the Hindi-Urdu controversy, the eternal conflict between conservative and reformist Islam. Ideas of history were in a state of flux. Shibli wrote a series of articles in the *Muslim Gazette* of Lucknow (1913) urging the Muslims to change their policy and align themselves with the nationalist freedom movement. In one of these he detailed instances of Hindu loyalty to Muslim rulers and in unqualified terms praised the former's generosity in spite of Muslim bigotry, emphasizing that the Indian Muslims should feel grateful and look upon the Hindus as their friends. Four years later he modified this view and admitted that Hindu services were given in return for the kindness and liberalism of Muslim rulers.[24] At this period the main preoccupation of the Urdu writer was to discover the theological and historical rightness of current Muslim politics. Pan-Islamism still dominated their vision and they firmly maintained their position as a part of the world community, not specifically Indian or territorial in their affiliations, who had earned the love and respect of the Hindus and with whom they thus had a long-standing friendship and common interest. Shibli's magazine articles, later collected in his *Maqalat* (eight volumes), emphasizing the civilizing role of Islam, particularly in the field of learning, carefully nursing Hindu-Muslim friendship, and at the same time advocating the organization and revival of religious and theological education to counter the Arya Samajist propaganda, represent the conflict which this period intensified in the Muslim mind.

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[22] *Aurangzeb Alamgir par ek Nazar*, p. 7.

[23] Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam*, p. 281.

A clearer pattern of historical thought emerged by the middle twenties after the Khilafat agitation failed and the warmth of Hindu-Muslim rapprochement cooled off. Shibli's ideas, however, continued to influence Urdu writers. His greatest service to Urdu historiography was in creating a tradition of exact textual study of the original documents—a method of research largely acquired from his acquaintance with European scholarship, which has tended in recent times to bring Urdu historical writings nearer and even complementary to works written in English. This tradition has been maintained and developed mainly through the Darul Musannefin, later known as Shibli Academy, of Azamgarh. The members of this intellectual organization are headed by Sulaiman Nadvi who, after Shibli, is the most important historian in Urdu. The group has retained the basic ideological pattern of Shibli's mind—a lingering anti-western feeling, nationalistic outlook, attachment to a Pan-Islamic cultural pattern, a dominant interest in literature and theology, and a stubborn belief that Indian Muslims and their culture are largely foreign, though domiciled, elements in Indian life whose separate identity should be recognized and preserved, not by opposing or suppressing the Indian elements but by accepting their respective importance. Any idea of a fusion of the two elements, now or in the past, even as a desirable development, is thus foreign to this group.

The Azamgarh group's historical writings have been mostly in the field of literature and theology. It has shown little interest in political history; very recently—perhaps under the pressure of the rising tempo of the freedom movement—India has been included in its literary and cultural histories.[25] It, however, tries to keep in touch with modern historical research and publishes an occasional translation or summary of significant English writings in its monthly journal, *Maarif*. Using a slight variation of the

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[24] *Maqalat*, vol. 8, *Musalmanon Ka Political Karwat*, No. 4.

[25] e.g. *Bazm-e-Mamlukia, Bazm-e-Taimuria*, by S. Abdur Rahman (1953–8).

Tabaqat form of historiography, literary and theological history is treated biographically—thus a history of the Prophet's companions, of their companions (*tabeins*), then of the latter's companions (*tabe-tabein*) and so on, a series on the Sufis, on the literatures of Mughal and pre-Mughal India, etc. There is also a combination in it of the Persian literary *Tazkirah* form. Such literary histories treated biographically in the form of *Tazkirah*, with copious extracts of poetry and prose, have, indeed, become the dominant feature of recent historical writing in Urdu, and even authors with a western training and not connected with the Azamgarh group, like S. M. Ikram, have adopted it to express their interest in history.[26] A slightly different expression of more or less the same concepts and interests is instanced by the writings of another small group, a product of the theological seminary of Deoband (U.P.) who use literature and orthodox religious learning as the principal theme in histories such as Tufail Ahmad's *Mussalmanon ka uruj wa zawul* (Rise and Decline of the Muslims) or *Mussalmanon ka raushan Mustaqbil* (The Bright Future of the Muslim). Unlike the Azamgarh group, these writers do not use the European methodology of comparative and exact study of the sources and evince little interest in the results of western research.

Writings illustrative of the nationalistic approach to India's history are few in Urdu, and from the thirties this school of thought has been losing ground. Of this group, Sulaiman Nadvi is the leading figure. In 1931 he published his *Arab O Hind Ke Taalluqat*, a collection of papers read at the Hindusthani Academy of Allahabad, in itself an organization devoted to fostering the cultural and linguistic synthesis of Hindu and Muslim communities. Documented from original Persian and Arabic sources the book brings together all those facts of history which prove close contact and co-operation between India and Arabia in the early middle ages. The objective of this approach is stated in the preface—to remind the Hindus and Muslims of that golden age when the two peoples were tied by so many bonds of friendship. For, 'he was convinced that the present communal conflict is largely the result of wrong teaching of history, and so a great responsibility now rested on the historians'.[27] It is significant that he considers the past of the Indian Muslims as identical with that of the Arabs. The *Tarikh-e-Sultanat-e-Khudadad* (1939) of Mahmud Banglori—a history of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan—exemplifies another aspect of this nationalistic trend—presentation of historical figures as national heroes valiantly fighting against British imperialism. To this group of political historical literature belongs Pandit Sundarlal's *Hindusthan me Angrezi Hukumat*, frankly anti-British in sentiment and mainly summarizing the

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[26] In his three-volume history of Muslim intellectual activities in India, entitled *Chasma-e-Kausar, Rud-e-Kausar,* and *Maui-e-Kausar* (no date, possibly between 1945 and 1950).

[27] Preface, p. 1.

Congress view of British rule in India. This, incidentally, is the only historical work in Urdu by a Hindu[28] and stresses the oneness of Hindu-Muslim culture and their destiny. A more comprehensive presentation of this theme—a history of Indian nationalism and national culture—was published during the last war by Abed Husain of the Jamia Millia of Delhi—a nationalistic Muslim educational institution founded during the Khilafat and non-co-operation movement. This is one of the best attempts in Urdu at a balanced assessment of the factors responsible for the growth of a composite Indian culture, in which Islam is seen as playing a complementary and not a disruptive or extraneous role. Aurangzeb—a test-case in Indian history—is neither condemned nor overpraised, but is presented as an idealist of the type of Aśoka, eager to see Islam practised in its true spirit and not merely in form, and careless of cheap popularity, but failing, like all such idealists, against the hard realities of the age, which was moving fast towards a secular outlook.[29]

Mention should also be made of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, a civilian by profession, who published in the late twenties three books—collection of his lectures at the Hindusthani Academy—on the social and cultural history of India. In form and treatment his writings, however, are exceptional in Urdu, inasmuch as he used European methods of research and indeed published some original research papers in English also. His Urdu writing, using the modern technique and comparative analytical study of sources in all languages, can, therefore, very well rank with original English works on history and they are, in fact, addressed to an informed, English-knowing audience and not organized on the model of Persian histories. The prevalent patriotic fervour, however, also touched him; in discussing the Mutiny in his *Angrezi ahd me Hindusthani Tahzib*, he refers pointedly to the injustice and racial animosity of contemporary British people who glossed over their own excesses and magnified the crime of the Indians.

The 'separatist' school of Indian history found sustenance and in itself gave support to the Pakistan movement. It picked out and developed elements of thought which, as we have seen, were partly implicit in the intellectual content of the Aligarh movement and found expression in the writings of Shibli and Sulaiman Nadvi. This school is sharply opposed to the nationalistic conception and affirms the fundamental separateness of the Muslim from the stream of native Indian life; it stresses the Indian Muslims' cultural and political affinity with the Middle East, and finds little worthy of attention or respect in Indian or Hindu culture. In many ways it is revivalist in spirit, and there is a theological bias in its appraisal of history. There is little enthusiasm or interest in pre-Muslim India, and Aurangzeb is the national hero, Akbar and Dara Shikoh, traitors to the cause of Islam. Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, an orthodox divine of Jahangir's reign who opposed Akbar and Abul Fazal's liberalism, is the true intellectual leader of the Muslims who, together with Aurangzeb, and also with Syed Ahmad Brelvi and Shah Ismail—the nineteenth-century Wahabi leader—visualized the Muslim State which is now Pakistan. It, however, uses European methodology and though opposition to western culture is latent in its approach, is modern in its acceptance of western political ideals and institutions. A representative work of this school is the *Tarikh-e-Pak O Hind* by Hashim Faridabadi, published in two volumes from Karachi in 1952. For obvious reasons this is the officially accepted view of Indian History in Pakistan.

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[28] Another Urdu work, *Qarn-e-Wusta me Hindusthani Tahzib*, by G. H. Ojha (Allahabad, 1931), was originally written in Hindi and was translated in Urdu by Premchand.

[29] p. 259.

Curiously, a marxist or materialistic school of history has not developed in Urdu.[30]

In summing up a few points call for comment:

1. Urdu historiography has taken little interest in administration and economic history or social or political institutions, even purely political history is rare, its interest in literature and theology is predominant, the usual form of treatment being biographical.
2. Principles of representative government or extension of the people's sovereignty as a theme of history have rarely interested Urdu historians.
3. It has not completely freed itself from the traditional form and attitude of the medieval Muslim histories.
4. Historical writing has generally expressed the Muslim attitude; Hindus using Urdu for historical composition are extremely rare.
5. It has not made any significant contribution to a knowledge of India's history; for factual knowledge of the past, it has remained dependent on researches published in English, its main preoccupation being to interpret and apply the known historical facts to its favoured themes.
6. In dating, the Hijra era is common; the Christian era is used only occasionally (excepting Yusuf Ali) by those who utilize western research such as the Darul Musannefin group.
7. In the manner of providing bibliographical references, the traditional Persian method is still alive; by using the modern western practice of supplying exact title and page references in the footnotes, A. Yusuf Ali provides an exception to the rule. Generally, authority is cited in the body of the text, but exact details as to edition, year of publication, or even page references are unusual. Use of inverted commas to indicate quotation from other works is not common. Notes are usually placed at the foot of the page, but sometimes, as in the Lahore Oriental College Magazine, in the body of the text within brackets. There is no generally accepted system

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[30] Professor Cantwell Smith, however, tells me that he has a copy of Ghulam Bari, *Kampani Ki Hukumat Hindusthan me*, which he would class as a marxist writing. I have not been able to procure a copy of this book.

for abbreviating the often long titles of books and authors, nor is any notation or abbreviated term used to avoid repeating the same title or author. European names offer the greatest difficulty; for no system is followed in transliteration, and such words are usually miswritten or misread in Urdu lithograph; to avoid confusion such works are sometimes written in the Roman script and in brackets.

INDEX

Abbasides, 295, 488
Abd al-Aziz, 294 n., 307
Abdullah, Sayyid Muhammad, 327, 331
Abdu-l-Qadir, Sir, 327, 331
Abed Husain, 322, 325, 326, 331, 494
Abhidhamma, 46, 48
Abul Fazal, 141, 150, 495; career, 143; method of work, 143–4; style, 145–6; view of history, 146–7
Adi Purana, 14, 15
Afghanistan, 27, 245, 455
Afif, Shams al-din Siraj, 120, 121, 126
Agha Khan, 327, 329, 331
Ahmad Ali, 322, 327, 331
Ahmad, Muhammad Bashir, 294 n., 307
Aibak, Qutb al-din, 116, 117
Ain-i-Akbari, 6, 146, 483; *see also* Abul Fazal
Aitchison, Sir C., 387, 464
Aiyangar, K. V. Rangaswami, 111, 112
Aiyangar, S. K., 66, 69 n.
Ajatasatru, 53, 54, 268
Ajmeri, Shaikh Moin-ud-din Chishti, 130, 133, 135, 137
Akbar, Jalal ud-din Muhammad, 6, 28, 90, 141, 143, 147, 149, 215, 273, 303, 304, 307, 312, 316, 348, 398, 400, 490, 494, 495
Akbar Namah, 143, 145, 146
Alamgir Namah, 150
Albiruni, 66, 331, 490
Alexander, the Great, 27, 99, 101, 264, 265, 267, 269, 277, 285, 289, 290
Aligarh, 295, 303, 308; movement, 331, 483, 484, 490, 494; school, 296, 303
Allahabad, 379; inscription, 270
Allan, J., 101
al-Tabari, 117, 118, 119, 125
al-Yaqubi, 117, 119
Ambedkar, B. R., 105, 108
America, 192, 334; War of Independence, 208
Amir Ali, 295, 303, 304, 308
Andrews, C. F., 351, 352, 411
Anglo-French rivalry, 199, 204
Annals: Ceylonese, 36, 41; Portuguese, 169
Arabia, 117, 157, 175, 333, 455
Archaeology: 'text-aided' and 'text-free', 241–242; influence of Darwinism on, 242–3; Indian, four main periods of, 243; the Early period, 244–6; the Cunningham period, 246–50; the Marshall period, 252–8; the period of Wheeler and Independence, 258–9
Archives: of Berlin, 230; Coloniales, 186; du Ministère des Colonies, 187; Dutch, 172; of Hague, 175, 178; of Hyderabad, 203; of London, 195; of Madras, 190, 195; Nationales, 189; of Paris, 190, 195; of Pondicherry, 190, 195, 206, 208
Aristotle, 97
Arnold, Sir T. W., 139, 225 n., 301, 302, 487
Arthasastra, 13, 15, 24, 26, 35, 114, 290; *see also* Kautilya
Aryans, 105, 273, 274, 287, 422; stock, 393, 394; tradition, 274; virtues, 274
Arya Samaj, 453, 454, 470, 485, 491, 492
Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1, 87, 218, 227, 245, 252, 261, 483
Asoka, 29, 33, 51, 52, 61, 269, 270, 279, 285, 288, 293, 323, 426, 452, 467, 494
Asokavadana, 52
Attakatha, 30, 48, 49
Auber, P., 338 n.
Auliya, Shaikh Nizam-ud-din, 123, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137
Aurangzeb, 149, 150, 216, 304, 307, 322, 398, 400, 467, 471, 489, 490, 494, 495
Azim Husain, 326, 331
Azizu-l-Haqq, 328, 331

Babar, 7, 146, 149
Badaun, 135, 147, 375
Badauni, Mulla Abdul Qadir, 6, 147–8, 318
Bahman Shah, Ala al-din, 124; Bahmani sultanate, 125, 136
Bakhshi, Nizamuddin Ahmad, 6, 147, 148–9
Bakhtiyar, Shaikh Qutb-ud-din, 129, 131, 133, 135
Baldaeus, Philippus, 170, 171, 174
Banaras, 50, 78, 367, 375, 383, 437
Bande Mataram, 438, 444, 445
Banerji, Rakhal Das, 255, 285, 451, 457
Banerji, Surendranath, 25, 410, 425
Barbé, E., 207, 208
Barbier, J., 87, 185, 189
Barbosa, Duarte, 162, 164, 169
Bardic literature, Indian, 87–92; historical value, 92–3
Barni, Zia al-din, 120, 122–3, 125, 126, 135, 317, 319, 483, 489
Basham, A. L., 5, 45
Basu, B. D., 424, 467
Basu, Ram Ram, 446, 447
Bengal, 102, 167, 171, 203, 209, 213, 217, 225, 333, 334, 335, 367, 479, 484; British acquisition, 396; condition under early British rule, 345; effects of British rule, 394; emergence of middle class, 446; growth of nationalist sentiment, 432, 445; history of, 457, 459; partition, 413, 452

Beni Prasad, 108, 468
Bentham, J., 219, 220, 389
Benthamism, 223, 337
Bentinck, Lord William, 347
Bernier, F., 215, 216, 395
Besant, A., 176, 282
Beveridge, H., 239, 297, 340, 390, 410
Beveridge, Sir W., 390, 408
Bhandarkar, Sir Ramkrishna Gopal, 103, 104, 105, 260, 276, 280–2, 283, 284, 286, 287, 290, 293, 421
Bhats, 88, 89, 90–2, 479
Bibliotheca Indica, 295
Bibliothèque Nationale, 189
Bird, R. M., 226, 245
Bocarro, Antonio, 155, 156, 161, 162, 164, 168, 169
Boxer, C. R., 155, 162
Brahmans, 4, 17, 65, 81, 103, 109, 112, 170, 270, 278, 349, 362, 366, 368, 494; Brahmanism, 32, 84
Brahmi: inscriptions, 68; script, 245, 261
Bright, J., 339, 389, 390
British Association, 242
British Museum, 98, 249
Browne, C. P., 357, 372, 378
Buchanan, C., 221, 244, 370
Buddha, 30, 33, 46, 47, 50, 51, 53, 73, 75, 80, 85, 111
Buddhism, 29, 30, 32, 33, 40, 58, 65, 82–4, 102, 166, 257, 264, 280; early Buddhism, 52, 275
Buddhist: historical traditions, 29, 36, 40, 72, 74, 83, 85; philosophy, 46, 69; records, 50, 55; samgha, 46, 53; schools, 49; scriptures, 292
Bühler, J. G., 21, 249, 338, 360, 372
Burgess, J., 248, 249, 252, 253
Burke, E., 239, 337, 390, 391, 396
Burma, 55, 161, 401
Burnell, A. C., 357, 358, 360, 370, 372
Bussy, Marquis of, 183, 191, 193, 199, 200, 202, 204, 205, 207, 383

Calcutta, 9, 197; emergence of middle class in, 429, 430; origin and growth of, 456
Calcutta University, 449
Caliphs, 117, 118, 133, 135
Cambridge History of India, 13, 99, 109, 155, 228, 229, 239 n., 257, 276, 290, 292, 318, 335, 403, 409, 412, 466, 470
Canning, Lord, 373, 374, 381, 383
Carey, W., 211, 429
Carita, 18, 42
Carlyle, T., 230, 341, 487, 489
Castes, Caste system, 93, 102, 103, 104, 105, 108, 112, 113, 270, 271, 275, 300, 313, 362, 363, 367, 369, 394, 395, 397, 420, 422, 431, 454, 456
Caulukyas, 19, 27
Ceylon, 1, 3, 29, 35, 40, 44, 45, 48, 49, 51, 55, 56, 60, 61, 72, 74, 78, 79, 160, 167, 209, 263, 268, 371; British government in, 83, 86; Christianity in, 85; and Dutch historians, 169–79; *see also* Pali Chronicle of Ceylon
Chaitanya, 143, 432, 454
Charans, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92
Chatterjee, Bankim Chandra: contribution to Hindu nationalism, 9 n., 229, 438, 445; and Hinduism, 420; his inheritance, 429; and Bengali prose, 430–1; and English, 430; his theology, 431–5; and history, 435–6; his hero-worship, 436–8; his attitude to Muslims, 439–40; his attitude to the British, 440–5
Chaudhuri, Nirad, 444, 445
Childe, V. G., 241, 259, 341 n.
China, 49, 56, 167, 200, 209, 210, 212, 333; Chinese cosmography, 158; geographical data on, 117
Chiragh, Shaikh Nasir-ud-din, 129, 135, 136, 137
Chirol, Sir V., 407, 414
Chishti: mystics, 122, 131, 133, 135; saints, 143, 298; shaikhs, 130; *silsilah*, 133, 134
Christianity: as synthesis of Hinduism and Islam, 264, 265; as culmination of Indian religions, 411; opposition to, in India, 432; its propagation in India, 104, 374; its spread in India, 345, 346; *see also* Missionaries.
Chronicles: in ancient India, 45, 58, 59; Bakhar, 9, 474, 475; Muslim, 115; Rajput, 262; Portuguese and Spanish, 156, 158; *see also* Kashmir Chronicle *and* Pali Chronicle
Chronologies, 96, 123, 473, 474, 475
Civilization: European, 215; Hindu, 128, 181, 218, 219, 224, 421; Indian, 45, 221, 228, 272; Indus Valley, 255, 283; Muslim, 165, 181, 219, 295, 302; Tamil, 211, 213
Cobden, R., 339
Code of Gentoo Laws, 102, 218, 359 n., 370
Coins, 59, 96, 141, 245, 247, 254; of ancient India, 95, 97, 252; of Kashmir, 97; as material for history, 94–5, 98, 101; Roman, 68; the science of, 98; *see also* Ideas of history
Colas, 42, 71, 279 n.
Colebrooke, H. T., 102, 218, 220, 352, 365, 366
Colenbrander, H. T., 174, 177, 179, 180
Collingwood, R. G., 241, 255, 256, 258
Communism, 313, 458; *see also* Marxism
Coolhaas, W. Ph., 179, 181
Coomaraswamy, A. K., 241 n.
Copenhagen: Museum of Arts, 216; Oriental philological school at Copenhagen University, 211; Public Record Office, 214; Royal Library, 214
Cotton, Sir H., 227, 410, 413
Coupland, Sir R., 334, 414
Culavamsa, 29, 31, 32, 34–8, 40, 41, 42, 43
Cumming, Sir J., 253 n., 412
Cunningham, Sir H. S., 243, 244, 245, 246–50, 257, 259, 387 n.
Curzon, Lord, 227, 252, 342, 407, 413, 424

Dange, S. A., 114, 290 n., 292 n., 479

Dara Shikoh, 305, 490, 494
Daru-l-Musannifin, 322, 492, 495
Darwin, C., 241, 242, 243, 389, 434; Darwinism, 242, 249
Datta, Bhupendra Nath, 453, 456
Datta, Michael Madhusudan, 438, 445
Dayanand, Swami, 103, 282, 290, 420, 470, 485
de Barros, João, 155, 156, 157–9, 160, 162, 164, 168, 169
de Castanheda, Fernão Lopez, 155, 157, 159, 162, 163–5, 168, 169
Deccan, 136, 166, 167, 197, 199, 200, 203, 213
de Lally, Comte, 183, 193, 200–2, 207, 388
de la vallée Poussin, L., 260, 274–80, 284, 291
Delhi, 123, 124, 131, 135, 136, 213, 383; antiquities of, 482; buildings of, 323; fall of, 381; Mutiny at, 384; re-occupation of, 383; Sayyid rulers of, 120; Sultanate of, 5, 6, 121, 123, 306; Timur's capture of, 121
Denmark, 211, 214
Deoband, 493
de Pina, Ruy, 156–7, 159, 168
des Fosses, H. Castonnet, 184, 186, 194
de Silva, Simon, 85, 86
Dhammadipa, 33, 40, 41
Dhammakitti, 31, 43, 73
Dhammapada commentary, 51
Dharma, 15, 33, 40, 433, 435, 474
Dharmasastras, 13, 15, 24, 109, 110, 111, 362, 365–7
Dharmasutras, 103, 107
Digby, W., 227, 424
Dikshitar, V. R. R., 67, 68, 286
Dipavamsa, 31, 40, 49
do Couto, Diogo, 155, 156, 158, 159–61, 163, 164, 166, 167, 169
Dodwell, H. H., 115, 228, 259, 408, 414
Dowson, J., 226, 297, 317
Dubois, J. A., 221
Duff, A., 374
Duff, Grant, 222, 223, 475
Dutt, B. N., 105, 114
Dutt, J. C., 57
Dutt, R. C., 106, 280, 314, 341, 424, 430; *Civilisation in Ancient India*, 104, 421; *Economic History of India*, 407
Dutt, R. Palme, 425
Duttha Gamani, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 79–80, 81
Dvapara age, 22

East India Company, 102, 184, 217, 334, 335, 388, 402, 427
Edinburgh Review, 234, 390
Edwardes, S. M., and Garratt, H. L. O., *Mughal Rule in India*, 318
Elliot, Sir H. M., 124, 139, 145, 146, 226–9, 297, 369, 462, 481, 489, 491
Ellis, F. W., 358, 362–5, 369
Elphinstone, Mountstuart, 2, 7–9, 145, 146, 217, 222, 223–9, 272, 297, 346, 406, 410, 422, 461, 477, 489, 491; *History of India*, 103, 140, 418, 482; *History of Hindu and Muhammadan India*, 221
Elwin, Verrier, 87 n., 92
Eminent Mussalmans, 326, 331
England, 103, 184, 185, 192, 194, 195, 219
Epics, 14, 22, 69, 109, 263, 283, 292, 419, 422; epic traditions, 56, 262, 283
Epigraphia Indica, 257
Epigraphy, 142, 242
Erskine, W., 223, 224, 225, 244
Evangelicals, Evangelism, 222, 373

Fa-hsien, 108, 269
Faizi, 143, 147
Faraizi movement, 455
Farid, Shaikh, 130, 131, 133–5, 137
Farquhar, J. N., 350, 352, 407, 411, 450
Faruki, Zahir ud-din, 294 n., 303
Fatawa-i-Jahandari, 122
Ferguson, J., 82, 242, 244, 245, 248, 249, 250, 257, 259
Ferishta, 6, 481
Fick, R., 107, 109, 112, 113
Firminger, Archdeacon, 409
Fisher, H. A. L., 231, 411
Forbes, D., 219, 225 n.
Forrest, Sir G., 380, 383, 403
Fort William College, 446, 447, 461, 482
Foster, W., 342, 403
France, 7, 184, 185, 192, 195, 480
French Colonial Empire, 187, 188, 191, 192, 197
French Company, 183, 184–9, 190, 194
Froude, J. A., 230, 341, 489
Futuh al-Salatin, 123, 124–5
Fuwaid-ul-Fuad, 129 n., 134, 135, 136, 137

Gandhi, Mahatma, 176, 299, 303, 352, 414, 426
Garratt, G. T., 318, 412, 414
Gaudalekhamala, 454
Gaudart, Edmond, 205, 206
Gaudavaho, 18, 23
Genealogies, 16, 17, 45, 56, 57, 71, 78, 89, 90, 117, 158, 474
Gentoo Code, see *Code of Gentoo Laws*
German Indologists, 109, 281
Ghalib, 321, 482, 486
Ghazals, 124
Ghent, University of, 274
Ghoshal, U. N., 57, 110
Ghurye, G. S., 106, 112
Gibbon, E., 219, 220 n., 407
Grant, C., 218, 222, 344, 345, 348, 395, 406
Greece; Greeks, 27, 68, 99, 101, 110, 117, 244, 480
Grierson, Sir G., 310
Gupta, R. K., 449, 450, 457
Guptas, Imperial, 16, 262, 285

Habib, Muhammad, 130, 294 n., 297–301, 308, 309
Hadith, 116, 117, 125, 299, 487
Haig, Sir W., 226, 228, 297

Haileybury College, 225, 226
Halévy, É., 220, 221, 414
Halhed, Nath, 218, 359 n., 370
Hali, Altaf Husain, 295, 321, 322, 484, 485, 486
Hamont, Tibbulle, 193, 202, 203
Hardy, P., *Historians of Medieval India*, 1
Harsa-carita, 17, 18, 23, 58
Hastings, Warren, 192, 217, 218, 221, 231, 233, 234, 235, 239, 317, 336, 337, 386, 391, 396, 401, 405, 408, 424
Havell, E. B., 273, 274
Haverfield, F. J., 256, 258
Hegel, G. W. F., 265, 288; Hegelianism, 265, 292
Herodotus, 27, 217
Hill, J., 394, 403
Hinduism, 34, 58, 128, 174, 218, 219, 222, 398, 399, 420, 421, 433, 442
Hindu law, 218, 359, 361, 362, 366, 368
Hindus, 6, 9, 23, 24, 65, 170, 217, 218, 365, 372, 485; Christian missionaries on, 344, 345, 348, 349, 352; Elphinstone on, 225, 418; European writers on, 419–20; James Mill on, 103, 220–1, 417–18; reaction to Western criticism of, 420–4
Hindustani Academy of Allahabad, 493, 494
Historians: administrator, 99, 140, 310–11, 354, 357, 408; Arabic, 115; British, 2, 7–9; indigenous, 9; legal, 354; London school of, 9; nationalist, 85, 289, 310, 314, 385; Persian, 115, 139; Sinhalese, 74, 78, 80, 85–6
Historical consciousness: in modern indigenous writing, 9; among Hindus, 24–5; among Muslims in India and Pakistan, 319, 321, 323, 330–1
Historical materialism, 299
Historical novels, 429, 435, 491
Historical traditions: in Marathi, 9; in Sinhalese, 9; in Kashmir, 57, 65; absence of, in Hindi, 466
Historical writing, lack of, in Ancient India, 4, 25–7
History: administrative, 409; 'Amsterdam school' of, 182; as an art, 97, 151; as a science, 97, 99; as a succession of events, 119, 148, 151; Cyclic conception of, 33; 'dead', 174, 177, 178; didactic, 55, 122, 151, 179, 345, 387, 400, 401, 486, 489; dynastic, 45; Europocentric, 8; general, 117, 119, 155; legal, 354, 372; legendary, 268; literary, 321, 327, 406, 493; Marxist interpretation of, 113, 308, 309, 384, 458, 469, 495; Muslim, 5–6, 125, 139; national, 45, 156, 157, 183, 417, 425, 428, 466, 493; official, 143, 156, 172, 173, 351; periodization of, 181, 287, 404; philosophy of, 122, 139, 150, 215, 288, 292, 392, 478; political, 260, 267, 268, 275, 279, 289, 292, 406–9, 412, 427, 450, 459; pragmatic view of, 267, 288, 291, 311, 314; regional, 466, 471, 479, 482; secular, 74, 155; separatist school of, 494; social, 318, 372, 410, 427, 450, 455, 457, 458, 494; verdict of, 307, 352; Whig view of, 231, 385, 403; *see also* Historians, Historical writing, Ideas of history
History and Culture of the Indian People, 260, 286, 289
Hobson, J. A., 340
Holmes, T. Rice, 383
Hopkins, E. W., 105, 107, 110
Hsuan Tsang, 18, 108, 268, 291
Hume, A. O., 220, 227, 407, 410
Hunter, Sir W. W., 8, 227, 228, 341–2, 373, 386, 387, 389, 390, 392, 393, 394, 401–2, 407, 412–13
Huxley, T. H., 242

Ibn Hasan, 294 n., 305, 307
Ibn-i-Arabi, Shaikh Mohiud-din, 130; school of, 131
Ibn Khaldun, 139, 307, 487
Ideas of history: in the Pali Chronicle of Ceylon, 35–40; in the Pali Canon, 49–52; in the Kashmir Chronicle, 63–5; in Sinhalese writings of the nineteenth century, 81–5; in coins, 95–7; in pre-Mughal Muslim historiography, 125–7; in modern Muslim writing on medieval India, 308–9
Ikram, S. M., 321, 493
Ilbert, Sir C., 409
India: Alexander's campaign in, 270; antiquities of, 245; Aryan invaders of, 437; Aryanization of, 293; British conquest and rule in, 230, 238, 334, 388, 403, 411, 494; Danish possessions in, 209; Dutch activities in, 315, 316; discovery of, 167, 218; European activities in, 189, 316; French activities in, 183, 184, 186–8, 190, 191, 203, 204, 217; Ghorid conquest of, 116, 120, 300, 307; impact of Western influences upon, 269, 411; influence of Hellenistic ideas on, 100, 269; Islam in, 93, 128, 129, 132, 471; post-Asokan, 33; post-Harsa, 65, 95, 96, 271; racial fusion in, 105; sea route to, 209; South, 45, 68, 164, 188, 200
India House (Lisbon), 156, 158, 200
India Office, 200, 201
Indian Civil Service, 225, 228, 229, 266, 272, 310, 314, 321, 326, 385, 390, 418
Indian National Congress, 310, 404, 413, 453
Indian school of Indology, 467
Innes, Justice L. C., 356, 360, 361, 362, 367
Irvine, W., 297, 410
Isami, 123, 124–5
Ishwari Prasad, 297
Islam, 6, 10, 116, 118, 128, 129, 148
Ismail, Sir Mirza, 327, 331
Isnad, 118, 119, 125
Itihasa, 4, 5, 13–15, 24; *Itihasa-Purana*, 36, 38, 40, 41, 50, 56
Itivrtta, 13, 14, 15, 24

Jafar, S. M., 294 n., 304, 305, 330
Jahangir, 132. 148, 348, 395, 495

Jains, 14, 19, 20, 50, 67, 69, 88, 109
Jataka, 36, 40, 50, 52, 114
Jayasimha, 58, 64
Jayaswal, K. P., 110, 265, 270, 283, 284, 289, 291, 423, 466, 467
Jesuits, 159, 166, 211, 369
Jinnah, M. A., 326, 330, 331
Jones, Sir W., 102, 218, 220, 221, 229, 243, 244, 365, 366, 411
Journal of the Archaeological Society of Delhi, 245
Journal of Indian History, 317
Juzjani, Minhaj al-Siraj, 118, 119, 126, 137–8

Kabir, Humayun, 322, 325, 329, 331
Kadayim-pot, 74, 77, 78
Kaeppelin, P., 188, 189
Kaiqubad, Muizz al-din, 122, 124
Kalhana, 5, 17, 21, 26, 28, 45, 58–62, 64, 65; his concept of history, 21–3, 63–5; his purposes, 61–3; his sources, 59–60
Kalidas, 469
Kali Yuga, 22, 32, 63
Kandy, 72, 73, 80, 81, 84, 85, 178; Kandyan kingdom, 29, 32
Kanishka, 61, 65, 96, 254
Kapital, Das, 266
Karma, 33, 35, 51, 55, 64, 65; Hindu theory of, 23
Kashmir, 5, 17, 21, 25, 28, 44, 45, 57, 59, 61, 62, 64, 65
Kashmir Chronicle, *see* Rajatarangini
Kautilya, 17, 24, 25, 38
Kavitta, 89
Kavya, 4, 36, 43, 47, 48, 55, 58, 61, 77, 436
Kaye, Sir J., 3, 379, 380, 382, 467
Keith, A. B., 21, 51, 105, 409
Kesadhatuvamsa, 42
Khalji, Ala al-din, 20, 121–3, 124, 125, 133, 138, 298, 300, 306, 318, 489
Khan, Sir Saiyid Ahmad, 295, 296, 298, 306, 308, 320, 383, 452, 482–3, 484, 485, 487, 489
Khan, Sir Shafaat Ahmad, 321, 324, 326, 331, 488
Khandhakas, 47
Khani, Muhammad Bihamad, 118, 119, 120, 126
Khare, Vasudev Shastri, 476, 478, 479
Khilafat movement, 138, 297, 331, 452, 455, 492, 494
Khusrau, Amir, 120, 123, 125, 133
Kipling, Rudyard, 206, 227, 341, 342
Kosambi, D. D., 114, 292 n.
Krom, N. J., 178, 179
Ksatriya, 16, 17, 45, 465
Kumarapala-carita, 18, 19
Kurunagalu-vistaraya, 74
Kuveni, 79, 82
Kuveni-asna, 79

Labernadie, M. V., 190, 191, 205, 206
Lane Poole, S., 3, 387, 491
Lassen, C., 260–2, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 276, 291, 292
Latif, Sayyid Muhammad, 324, 330, 331
Lecky, W. E. H., 374, 406
Legends, 38, 50, 52, 56, 58, 67, 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 107, 117, 119, 125, 135, 262, 263, 268, 281, 369, 447, 448
'Liberal' or 'Leyden' school, 180, 181
Lovett, V., 403, 413
Lyall, Sir A. C., 2; analysis of Indian history and society, 8, 9, 396–400; outlook, 388, 392, 393, 413; and British policy in India, 400–1, 402, 403

Macaulay, T. B., 227; significance of his writings on India, 230–2; his understanding of Indian problems, 232–4; his rhetoric, 234–5; Bengali estimate of, 235–6; on Indian literature and education, 237–8; *Essays* on Clive and Hastings, 238–40, 386, 387, 388, 391, 396
Mahabharata, 14, 67, 263, 292, 469, 473
Mahabodhivamsa, 32, 79
Mahaparinibbana Suttanta, 47, 53
Maharajavaliya, 76, 81, 84
Maharastra, 279 n., 445; saints of, 473–4; *see also* Marathas
Mahasammata, 50, 52, 75, 78
Mahavamsa, 4, 5, 29, 30, 31, 35, 38, 40–2, 49, 52, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82
Mahavihara, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 40, 41, 73
Mahmud Husain, 331
Maine, Sir H., 8, 360, 388, 389, 392, 393, 396, 397
Maitland, F. W., 406
Maitra, Akshoy Kumar, 449, 450, 451
Majumdar, R. C., 9, 110, 112, 113, 260 n., 286, 289, 290, 291 n., 457
Malcolm, Sir J., 221, 223, 336 n., 337, 340, 387, 406
Malerajakathava, 79
Malfuzat, 136, 142, 489
Malleson, G. B., 203, 204, 373, 374, 375, 382, 383, 388
Manimekhalai, 68, 69
Manu, 16, 35, 38, 50, 111, 314, 358, 360, 368
Manusmrti, 17, 102, 301
Marathas, 423, 449, 471, 474; Empire, 208
Marshall, Sir J., 252, 253, 256; Marshall period of Indian archaeology, 243, 252–8
Marshman, J. C., 346, 347, 348, 447, 448, 459, 461
Martin, F., 183, 187, 189, 193
Martin, M., 382
Martineau, A., 189, 190; *Dupleix et l'Inde Française*, 195–8; *Bussy et l'Inde Française*, 199–200, 203, 204, 207
Marx, Karl, 110, 288, 299, 300
Marxism, 3, 292, 309, 342
Mauryas, 279 n., 292; Mauryan dynasty, 48, 49, 100; Mauryan empire, 269
Megasthenes, 268
Mihirakula, 61, 64, 65, 285
Mill, James, utilitarianism, 7–8, 220–2; motives in writing on India, 219–20; attitude to Indians, 220–1, 417–18;

History of British India, 103, 219, 221, 223, 226, 405, 417; mentioned, 2, 7, 8, 9, 224, 225, 227, 228, 229, 233, 239, 249, 262, 272, 338, 390, 391, 392, 395, 399, 401, 406, 418, 448, 467
Mill, John Stuart, 219, 220, 227, 340
Missionaries, 210, 213, 310, 339, 363, 431, 433, 461; attitude to Indian religions, 344–5, 348–50; attitude to British rule, 345–8, 352–3; attitude to Indian nationalism, 351–3
Mitra, Kisori Chand, 383 n., 384
Mohenjo Daro, 254, 256, 323
Mongols, 118, 122, 123
Mookerji, R. K., 106, 110, 284, 289, 290, 422
Moreland, W. H., 2, 297
Mughals, 6–7, 353, 395, 398, 402, 488; architecture, 318; conquest, 58, 115; empire, 171, 172, 398, 404; rule, 490; *see also* Historians, History
Muhammad Ali, 296, 331, 490
Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, 295, 484
Muir, R., 337 n., 408
Muir, Sir W., 103, 107, 483
Müller, F. Max, 283, 370, 393, 421
Muntakhib-ut-Tawarikh, 147–8
Musaddas, 322, 485
Muslim: Chronicles, 115; cultural revival, 295; *Gazette*, 491; League, 331, 351; middle class, 484; society, 128, 132; *see also* Historians, Historical writing
Mutiny, 106, 224, 225, 226, 231, 238, 347, 351, 352, 387, 396, 402, 425, 448, 480, 483, 484, 489, 494
Mysticism, 128–30, 136, 142; mystics, 133, 142; *see also* Sufis

Nana, Dhondupant, 374, 375, 377, 379, 449
Naoroji, Dadabhai, 424, 480
Nationalism, and history, 27, 283; British historians and Indian nationalism, 412–414; Indian nationalism and history, 422–428; Bankimchandra and the development of Indian nationalism, 435–45; nationalism and historical writing in Bengali, 455–7; nationalism and historical writing in Hindi, 463, 465, 466, 467, 468; nationalism and historical writing in Marathi, 475, 480; Hindu nationalism, 229, 285, 440, 445; Muslim nationalism, 294; Indian nationalism and Muslims, 491, 494; regional nationalism, 61, 286
Nazim, Muhammad, 294, 301, 302
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 298
Nizami, Hasan, 123, 124, 125
Nomani, Shibli, 486–8, 490, 491, 492, 494; *Daru-l-Musannefin* or Shibli Academy of Azamgarh, 322, 492, 495
Non-co-operation movement, 297, 414, 453, 494

Ojha, Gaurishankar Hirachand, 462, 463, 464–5, 469, 472
O'Malley, L. S. S., 412, 414
Oral traditions, 30, 59, 86, 87, 92, 171
Orme, R., 221, 335
Osmania University, 315

Pakistan, 1, 3, 9, 10, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 495; movement, 329, 331, 457, 494
Pali Canon, 44, 46–7; its commentaries, 47–9; background and attitude of, 49–52; attitude to contemporary events, 52–5; as a historical record, 55–6
Pali Chronicle of Ceylon, 4, 44, 49; ideas of time in, 32; idea of destiny in, 33; ideas of man and society in, 34; ideas of history and historiography in, 35–40; historiographical analysis of, 40–3
Pan-Aryanism, 264, 273
Pan-Asianism, 286
Pan-Germanism, 264
Pan-Islamism, 304, 455, 485, 486, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492
Pandit, R. S., 21 n., 23 n., 57 n.
Panikkar, K. M., 427
Pargiter, F. E., 15, 16, 268, 287, 291
Parinibbana; *Parinirvana*, 33, 34, 47, 80
Pennsylvania, University of, 336
Periplus of the Erythraen Sea, 418
Peshwa Dafter Series, 478
Pillay, K. K., 66, 68
Pitt-Rivers, A. H. Lane-Fox, 252, 256, 258
Portugal, 156, 157, 163, 192; Portuguese activity in Asia, 80, 86, 156, 161, 165–8
Prasasti, 37, 38, 42, 43, 58, 59, 63; *Prasasti-patta*, 21
Pre-history, Indian, 250–2, 255–6
Prinsep, J., 220, 243, 244, 245, 246, 261
Pujavaliya, 73, 77, 79, 80
Puranas, 4, 13, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, 44, 45, 58, 59, 90, 262, 263, 268, 282, 447, 448, 454, 462; Puranic chronology, 287; Puranic king-lists, 276, 282; Puranic tradition, 44, 262, 268

Quran, 6, 116, 117, 119, 151, 295
Qurayshi, Anwar Iqbal, 328, 331
Qureshi, Ishtiaq Husain, 294, 302

Rajatarangini, 4, 5, 13, 20, 23, 26, 27, 57–65; *see also* Kalhana
Rajavaliya, 32, 75–8, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85
Rajput, Allah Baksh, 323, 329
Rajputs, 278, 304, 423, 436, 449, 451, 464, 465, 480; Rajput chronicles, 262; Rajput epics, 270
Rama-carita, 18, 19, 26
Ramayana, 292, 469, 473
Ranade, M. G., 410, 477, 480
Ray, H. C., 57, 286, 429
Raychaudhuri, H. C., 260, 276, 282, 284, 285, 290
Raynal, Abbé, 185–6, 213, 337, 405
Record Office, established by Akbar, 144
Rg Veda, 283, 290, 421
Rhys Davids, T. W., 108, 109, 423

Risley, Sir H. H., 105, 112, 113, 410
Roberts, P. E., 239, 407, 408, 414
Robertson, D., 376, 377
Roelofsz, M. A. P., 178, 179, 180
Roy, Nihar Ranjan, 458, 459
Roy, Raja Rammohan, 103, 236, 282, 429, 431, 459, 480, 482
Royal Asiatic Society, 360
Russell, J. H., 381
Russian Revolution, 414

Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 10
Sangam, 66–71; chronological basis of, 67–70; historical value of, 70–1; Sangam Academy, 66, 67
Sangha, 30, 33, 35, 36, 38, 47, 51, 53, 54, 55
Sardesai, G. S., 478, 479
Sarkar, Jadunath, 3, 150, 297, 303
Sasana, 21, 30, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39
Sastra, 21, 45, 368, 369
Sastri, K. A. Nilakanta, 67, 68, 70, 286
Savarkar, V. D., 384, 425
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 336
Scott, W., 222, 223
Seeley, J. R., 227, 338, 341, 399, 406, 479
Sen, Surendra Nath, 9, 455
Settlement Reports, 310, 311
Shah Nama, 124
Shajara-i-ansab-i-Mubarak Shah, 116–17
Sihrindi, Yahya ibn Ahmad, 118, 120
Sijzi, Amir Hasan, 129 n., 133–4, 136, 138
Simhala-attakatha-mahavamsa, 30, 31, 40
Simhala-Rajavaliya, 81, 82, 83, 85
Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi, 120–1
Sirhindi, Shaikh Ahmad, 132, 308, 495
Siyar-ul-Auliya, 134, 135
Siyarul Mutaakhkherin, 482
Smith, G., 339
Smith, V., 99, 155 n., 227–8, 231, 233, 249, 257, 260, 276, 278, 279, 281, 282, 288, 289, 290, 297, 310, 311, 316, 403, 418–19, 465, 466, 470; career, 266; pragmatic conception of history, 267; lack of objectivity, 268; consciousness of the fundamental unity of India, 269; hero-worship, 269–270; attitude to Indian literature and social and political systems, 270–2; an Anglophile, 273; Havell's criticism of, 273–4
Smith, W. Cantwell, 322, 484, 485 n.
Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 350
Spencer, H., 283, 432, 434
Stapel, F. W., 173, 178, 179, 180, 181
Stein, Sir M. A., 58, 62, 63, 64, 255, 256
Stephen, Sir J. F., 226, 227, 229, 237, 389, 390, 391, 392 n., 394, 400, 401
Stephen, L., 219
Sthaviras; Sthaviravada; Sthavira school, 46, 48, 50, 55, 56; *Sthavira Khandhakas*, 47
Stokes, E., *The Utilitarians and India*, 1
Strachey, Sir J., 227, 391, 392, 400
Sudras, 103, 105, 107, 108, 112, 368
Sufis; Sufism, 118, 121, 128, 129, 138, 395, 493
Suhrawardi order, 130, 131, 138
Suhrawardi, Shaikh Shihab-ud-din, 130, 131
Sundarlal, 467, 471, 493
Sutas, 15–17
Sutras; *Suttas*, 45, 46, 78, 104; *Suttantas*, 47

Tabaqat-i-Akbari, 147, 148, 482
Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, 118, 119, 120, 138
Tacitus, 234
Tagore, Debendranath, 431
Tagore, Rabindranath, 351, 414, 423, 427, 430, 431, 437, 450
Tarikh al-Rasul wal-Muluk, 117, 118
Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, by Afif, 120, 121, 126
Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, by Barni, 120, 122, 123, 126, 483
Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi, 6, 118, 120
Tarikh-i-Muhammadi, 118–19, 120
Tarn, Sir W. W., 98, 99, 100, 101, 269, 290
Tavernier, J. B., 215, 216
Tawney, C. H., 19, 20
Temple libraries, 56
Temple, Sir R., 387
Terpstra, H., 172, 175, 178–80, 318
Tessitori, L. P., 87, 88, 89, 90, 91
Theravada Buddhist philosophy, 34
Theravada sect, 40
Thompson, E., 228, 351, 352, 353, 412, 414
Thucydides, 23, 27
Tilak, B. G., 104, 283, 421, 480
Tod, J., 87, 90, 91, 223, 244, 245, 255, 257, 262, 263, 423, 464, 465
Toynbee, A. J., 320, 407
Tradition, 50, 56, 58, 67, 68, 72, 75, 270, 287 447
Trevelyan, Sir G., 237 n., 379 n., 382
Trevelyan, G. M., 407, 414
Tughluq Nama, 124
Tuzak-i-Jehangiri, 141, 149, 483
Tylor, Sir E. B., 242, 243 n.

Ulama, 121, 122, 134, 301, 306, 395, 399
Umma, 5, 117, 120, 299
Upadhyaya, Basudeva, 468, 469
Upanisads, 275, 278 n.
Utilitarianism, 7, 219–21
'Utrecht school', 181

Vamsa, 45, 47, 48, 49, 51, 56, 72; *Vamsavalis*, 17; *see also* Genealogies
van Dam, P., 172–4, 178
van Geer, W., 174, 175, 178, 180
van Leur, J. G., 180, 181, 182
Vanni, 75, 84; Vanni-hatpattuva, 75; *Vanni-rajavaliya*, 75
Vassakara, 51, 52, 54
Vedanta, 429, 431, 432, 433
Vedas, 13, 275, 283, 419, 421, 433; Vedic age, 109, 287, 421; Vedic Aryans, 395
Vickramankadev-Carita, 18, 23, 58
Vidyalankar, Jaya Chandra, 466, 467, 470, 472

Vidyasagar, Ishwarchandra, 103, 237, 448
Viharas, 30, 31, 37, 40, 43; Abhayagiri, 33; records of, 31, 41
Vijaya, 33, 75, 79, 80, 81, 82
Vinaya, 30, 45, 46, 47, 48
Visnu Smrti, 109
Voltaire, 194, 200, 201, 202, 215
Vyas, Ved, author of *History of Greater India*, 469

Wahabis, 377, 483, 495; Wahabi movement, 455
Wheeler, J. T., 379, 395, 396
Wheeler, Sir M., 258
Whiggism, 232
Whitehead, R. B., 97, 98, 99, 101
Wilkins, C., 218, 220
Wilson, H., 219, 221, 224, 225, 228, 245, 311, 405

Yusuf Ali, Abdullah, 321, 325, 494

Zakaullah, 295, 488, 489, 490, 491

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